

**Culture Shock in Travel Literature**  
**The literary works of**  
**Tiziano Terzani and Nicolas Bouvier**

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**Crossways in Cultural Narratives**

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**Lisbon, 06/2015**

Dissertação apresentada para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção  
do grau de Mestre em Crossways in Cultural Narratives, realizada sob a  
orientação científica de Mirosław Loba - UAM e Ana Gonçalves Matos - FCSH / UNL

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### **Abstract**

**Keywords:** Culture shock, Nicolas Bouvier, Tiziano Terzani, travel literature, identity, home, other.

The dissertation discusses elements of culture shock and re-entry culture shock in travel literature. The study is specifically concerned with the comparison of the effect of culture shock reflected in the works of two authors: Nicolas Bouvier and Tiziano Terzani.

After a short presentation of their biographies, including their motivation to travel and the meaning of leading a nomadic life, the thesis focusses on Terzani and Bouvier as writers and discusses the emergence of culture shock in chosen passages of their texts. Some important topics in this research regard the authors' identity, their understanding of being at home and the meaning of being the Other.

It was possible to conclude that the two writers suffered from culture shock during their journeys; Terzani mostly during his stay in Japan and Bouvier particularly in Ceylon. The result of the analysis shows that culture shock is not a short event, but a long process that has an enormous impact on the individual's life.

**Palavras-chave:** Choque cultural, Nicolas Bouvier, Tiziano Terzani, literatura de viagens, identidade, casa, outro.

Esta dissertação analisa elementos do choque cultural, bem como o processo de reinício do choque cultural na literatura de viagens. Este trabalho centra-se, essencialmente, na comparação dos efeitos do choque cultural no trabalho de dois autores: Nicolas Bouvier e Tiziano Terzani.

Após uma breve apresentação das biografias destes autores, no sentido de clarificar o que os motiva a viajar, bem como o significado uma vida nómada, esta dissertação centra-se em Terzani e Bouvier enquanto escritores e analisa o surgimento do choque cultural em várias passagens nos seus textos. Alguns dos tópicos investigados nesta dissertação relacionam-se com a identidade dos autores, bem como com o que para estes significa voltar a casa e com o que significa ser o Outro.

Neste estudo, é possível constatar que ambos os autores foram sujeitos ao choque cultural durante as suas viagens; Terzani sobretudo durante a sua estada no Japão e Bouvier

especialmente em Ceilão. Os resultados desta análise mostram que o choque cultural não é um acontecimento de curto-prazo, mas sim um processo com um impacto significativo na vida de um indivíduo.

Słowa kluczowe: Szok kulturowy, Nicolas Bouvier, Tiziano Terzani, literatura podróżnicza, tożsamość, dom, inny

Dysertacja omawia szok kulturowy (eng. *culture shock*) i proces jego reinicjacji w literaturze podróżniczej. Praca skupia się przede wszystkim na porównaniu zjawiska szoku kulturowego i jego efektów przedstawionych w książkach dwóch pisarzy: Nicolasa Bouviera i Tiziana Terzani.

Po prezentacji biograficznych faktów z ich życia, włącznie z ich podróżniczymi motywacjami, a także znaczenia nomadycznej egzystencji, praca koncentruje się na literackiej prezentacji szoku kulturowego w wybranych tekstach Terzani i Bouviera. Główne tematy badane w dysertacji dotyczą tożsamości, poczucia inności oraz przestrzeni domowej.

Na podstawie tych badań pojawia się wniosek, iż obaj pisarze podczas podróży cierpieli wskutek szoku kulturowego. Terzani szczególnie w Japonii, Bouvier na Cejlonie. Rezultaty analizy pokazują, że szok kulturowy nie jest krótkim wydarzeniem, ale długotrwałym procesem, mogącym wywierać wpływ na każdą osobę.

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## 1. Preface

The world is on the move. Travelling becomes more and more important in our globalised world: “We live, after all, in an era of increasing globalisation, in which mobility, travel and cross-cultural contact are facts of life, and an everyday reality, for many people” (Thomson, 2011:2). The individual can interpret travelling in different ways. It could mean a short travel, such as the journey to the working place every morning, it could be a trip to a holiday resort at the beach, and it could be a backpacking tour through the jungle. In any case, travelling implies mobility and mobility implies dealing with culture:

mobility must be taken in a highly literal sense. Boarding a plane, venturing on a ship, climbing onto the back of a wagon, crowding into a coach, mounting on horseback, or simply setting one foot in front of the other and walking: these are indispensable keys to understanding the fate of cultures (Greenblatt, 1995:250).

People travel for all sorts of different reasons and motivations: Trouble in their country of origin; a job that requires relocation. Students go abroad for a gap year; graduates decide to travel for a couple of months before they start studying or working. They already seem to feel this desire to travel and, in this case, to see other parts of the world, meet different cultures, make new friends, and change places. Moving to another country, even if for a limited period of time, does not only change the place we live in, the people we talk to, the language we communicate with, the food we eat. Travelling implies more significant transformations: During the travelling process a phenomenon occurs, which has come to be known as *Culture Shock*. According to Kalvero Oberg’s term, in 1960, it describes one’s feeling abroad and the difficulties of this big change in one’s life. The term has been widely discussed and studied, resulting in the identification and description of different phases during contact with different cultures, which has resulted, for example, in increasing social support of migrants in certain contexts (Stella and Craig, 2006).

Regardless of whether the experience abroad seems to be positive or negative, somehow it will change oneself. Travelling does not leave anyone unaffected and the experience relates with identity issues. If one transforms or develops an identity after living in another country, what happens then to people who do not go back to their previous life but who continue travelling? How do they deal with so many different and conflicting impressions and perspectives? And what kind of impact does this have on the relationship one has with the country and culture of origin? Leading a nomadic life is different to a holiday in a foreign country. What drives one to change location so many times and can people who are so used to traveling actually undergo the so called culture shock? And if so, what does it mean to them and their lives?

Culture shock has been already well discussed in terms of international business (Hoecklin, 1995; Marx, 1999; Ward et al. 2001, inter alia). It is common to find writers who have explored their analyses and reflections on the experience of travelling, thus it is very likely that many aspects of culture shock can be found in the so called *travel literature*, which leads us to the central idea of this dissertation: to examine ~~the~~ culture shock in this specific literary genre. Therefore, this dissertation will discuss the experiences of two authors – Nicolas Bouvier and Tiziano Terzani –, well known for their travel writing, focusing on symptoms of culture shock in their lives and in their work. Some of the guiding questions underlying this analysis are the following: What made these two authors leave their home countries to explore a life that is completely different from the one with which they were familiar with? How did they experience culture shock, how did it change them and why do they always return back *home*? What does it mean for them to be a stranger?

This dissertation will start with an introduction to Culture Shock Theory, followed by a short explanation of the choice of the examined authors and travellers. Then the two writers, their motivation to travel and the genre of travel writing will be

introduced. According to the theory on culture shock, various texts of the authors will be examined mostly in terms of culture shock, re-entry culture shock and in terms of identity issues that relate to those in powerful ways.

## 2. An introduction to Culture Shock Theory

Culture itself is a very complex phenomenon and this is why the term is often used expressing different meanings. Clifford Geertz sees a problem in understanding the term: "The trouble is that no one is quite sure what culture is" (Geertz, 2000:11). The reason for this could be the numerous definitions of the term itself. One of these definitions describes culture as a process, a thought shared by Stephen Greenblatt:

a concept covering the whole range of possibilities of signifying practices, including even those possibilities which are pushed to one side, repressed, neglected, or only existent as a potentiality in a single culture (Greenblatt, 2009:217).

Even if the focus of this dissertation does not lie on cultural studies but on literary studies, the word *culture* is included in the term *culture shock* and thus a clarification of both terms would be required. Following Stephen Greenblatt, the term culture is often used with an additional term: "*culture* is a term that is repeatedly used without meaning much of anything at all, a vague gesture toward a dimly perceived ethos: aristocratic culture, youth culture, human culture" (Greenblatt, 1995:225). If so, it could be assumed that the term culture shock highlights the shock and not 'culture'. However the word culture in the phrase 'culture shock' suggests that the shock has to be caused by culture and that is why it is necessary to understand both terms. The term 'culture' is widely and steadily discussed, especially in a time of globalisation. Starting from Oberg's understanding of culture shock, it is reasonable to also consider his definition of culture. In his text *Adjustment to new cultural environments*, Oberg describes culture as a "product of history" (1960:144). From childhood on, we develop our culture while adjusting to the environment around us. Culture is, therefore, according to Oberg, a process and



nothing we are born with. The fact that we get used to our culture or rather our way of life, generates a feeling of disorder and confusion, when being in places where characteristics of our culture cannot be found and a new cultural adjustment has to be done.

Thus, considering the concept 'culture shock', what does it actually mean, how can we experience it and what happens, if we are *infected* by it? "Culture shock (...) emphasizes the problematic nature of cross-cultural adaptation" (Kim, 2001:69), says Kim's short comment which underlines the fact that culture shock is neither uncommon nor a rare phenomenon, but overall a natural reaction when a human being comes into contact with a new cultural environment. Stella Ting-Toomey even describes culture shock as an "inevitably stressful and disordering experience" (Ting-Toomey, 1999:245). She also gives a precise definition of what culture shock means for the individual:

Culture shock refers to transitional process in which an individual perceives threats to her or his well-being in a culturally new environment. In this unfamiliar environment, the individual's identity appears to be stripped of all protection. The previously familiar cultural scenes and scripts are not operable in the new setting, and the previously familiar, cultural safety net has disappeared (Ting-Toomey, 1999:245).

In other words, culture shock refers to a feeling of being lost in an environment that differs from the familiar one. Just like the term culture itself, culture shock is also defined as a process. The unknown threatens the individual's health, psychologically as well as physically. The idea that the shock might develop potentially due to the cultural differences between the known and the unknown is reinforced. This thought can be illustrated in Kim's words: "Outstanding physical attributes such as height, skin colour, facial features, and physique often add to the overall 'foreignness' of strangers and to the psychological distance between the stranger and the local people" (Kim, 2001:81).

Now that a first impression of culture shock has been given, the kind of impact this can have on the authors concerned will be discussed. Therefore, it is important to briefly look at the origin of the term culture shock, which was invented by the US-

American anthropologist Cora DuBois first used in her speech on the 28th November 1951 during the first “Midwest regional meeting of the Institute of International Education” in Chicago. The term however, became famous with the US-American anthropologist Kalvero Oberg who used this expression during a presentation in Rio de Janeiro on the 3rd August 1953 and put it into writing in his paper “Cultural Shock – Adjustments to New Cultural Environments”, published in 1960. In this publication, Oberg divided the culture shock period into four phases: It starts with the so called ‘honeymoon phase’, the person has just arrived and is enthusiastic about everything and feels a strong sense of happiness. Oberg gives this period up to six months. It is followed by the phase of rejection. The individual is overwhelmed by all the new impressions and situations and develops a hostile attitude towards the host country. If one experiences this feeling very strongly, the stay abroad might finish with an early return to the home country. If the individual gets through this phase, it is followed by the recovery phase, in which one usually starts to learn the language of the host country and becomes acclimatised to the new systems and values. In the best case, culture shock ends with the adjustment phase: The individual can accept oneself in the new environment (Oberg, 1960). Oberg recognises culture shock as a disease with psychological as well as physical symptoms:

[...] excessive washing of the hands; excessive concern over drinking water, food, dishes, and bedding; fear of physical contact with attendants or servants; the absent-minded, far-away stare (sometimes called ‘the tropical stare’); a feeling of helplessness and a desire for dependence on long-term residents of one’s own nationality; fits of anger over delays and other minor frustrations; delay and outright refusal to learn the language of the host country; excessive fear of being cheated, robbed, or injured; great concern over minor pains and irritations of the skin; and finally, that terrible longing to be back home, to be able to have a good cup of coffee and a piece of apple pie, to walk into that corner drugstore, to visit one’s relatives, and, in general, to talk to people who really make sense” (Oberg, 1960:142-143).

The extract from his text Adjustment to new Environments however, does not specify to which culture his description refers to. It cannot be more than assumed from his bibliography that the US-American anthropologist, who was doing most of

his research in Latin America, also had cultures from South America in mind when he described the symptoms. Even though he used some examples from a Brazilian and US-American point of view, he keeps the culture shock description very general by always coming back to generalizations, without limiting the assignee. Single cultures are not the focus of his text, as shows the following passage: "In this paper we are interested not so much in the study of culture as such, but its impact upon the individual under special conditions" (Oberg, 1960:145). Oberg wants to point out the consequences of culture shock as a disease. Foster supports him in defining culture shock as such and calls it: "a mental illness, and as true of much mental illness, the victim usually does not know that he is afflicted" (Foster, 1962:187).

In addition to these symptoms, Stella Ting-Toomey underlines the positive effects of culture shock, such as "sense of well-being and heightened positive self-esteem; cognitive openness and flexibility; emotional richness and enhanced tolerance for ambiguity; competence in social interaction" (Ting-Toomey, 1999:246). This positive feeling may refer to Oberg's "Honeymoon phase" or to a person that manage to overcome the culture shock experiences. With the latter arises the question, how to reach this positive effect?

As Ting-Toomey states, culture shock is "an emotional phenomenon" (Ting-Toomey, 1999:245). That explains why the role of personality is important as well, extensively discussed two years ago in Zee's and Oudenhoven's paper *Culture Shock or Challenge? The Role of Personality as a Determinant of Intercultural Competence*. This importance of specific characteristics is noted in Kim's writing, too: "Along with ethnicity, strangers enter a host environment with a set of personality traits that tend to endure and remain unchanged throughout life. (...) Openness is such a trait" (Kim, 2001:84). Thus, it can be said that some people might be more vulnerable to suffer from culture shock due to their personality. However, some social capacities such as cultural empathy, open-mindedness and social initiative, can help prepare the individual for culture shock. Those traits can nowadays be developed in intercultural training (Zee and Oudenhoven, 2013:937).

## **2.1. Re-entry Culture Shock**

In 1955, Lysgaard illustrated the four phases of Oberg's Culture Shock in the form of a U-curve, eight years later, Gullahorn and Gullahorn expanded it into a W-curve, in which the so called 're-entry culture shock', also known as reverse culture shock (Sussman, 2002), was added to the culture shock concept (Ting-Toomey, 1999; Ward et al., 2001). According to Ting-Toomey, this reverse culture shock is as 'inevitable' as the culture shock itself: "Reentry shock involves the realignment of one's new identity with a once familiar home environment. After living abroad for an extensive period of time, reentry culture shock is inevitable" (Ting-Toomey, 1999:252). The natural outcome of culture shock and re-entry culture shock is supported in Sussman's paper, too: "the process of adjustment and the outcome of adaptation; culture shock and reverse shock" (Sussman, 2002:391).

Ting-Toomey speaks of a 'new identity' after the experience abroad. According to her, re-entry culture shock is caused by one's identity change and any kind of changes in the once familiar environment. This theory however, assumes that there must be an identity change during a period abroad. Identity becomes a central and voluminous topic in culture shock. That is why a separated chapter about identity will discuss it more detail and while examining Bouvier's and Terzani's works, identity changes will be constantly borne in mind.

## **2.2. Why Bouvier and Terzani?**

Before introducing the short biographies of Tiziano Terzani and Nicolas Bouvier, the choice of the two authors in this dissertation should be accounted for. Both led what could be called a nomadic life. Not only did they visit numerous parts of the world but they have also spent many years abroad. The cultures of their countries of origin, Italy and Switzerland, respectively, are different but inscribed in a shared European background. The fact that they followed similar pathways makes it more interesting to compare their work. There are many similarities between the two individuals, for example, they were not only literary authors, but simultaneously

journalists and photographers. They travelled through many parts of the world, but are both particularly passionate about Asia. They experienced World War II (Terzani only as a small child) and different wars in Asia and died of cancer at almost the same age (Terzani at the age of 66 and Bouvier at the age of 69). Despite all these similarities, one could hardly imagine that the way they travelled, their travel experiences and their styles of writing could be so different. Their experiences will be thus carefully compared providing an analysis of how each of them felt about the countries they visited and the role that culture shock played in their lives and in their work as writers.

The following section will offer a detailed look into the lives of these two authors who earned the biggest respect from the public, not only for the courage shown in their lives but also for the literature they provided, as well as the possibility to follow them virtually on their journeys.

### **3. Biography of the authors Tiziano Terzani and Nicolas Bouvier**

#### **3.1. Nicolas Bouvier**

Nicolas Bouvier was born on 6th March 1929 in Grand-Lancy, a small village near Geneva. His passion for the arts, especially literature, might have a connection to his bourgeois family. His paternal grandfather, Bernard Bouvier, was a professor of literary studies and his maternal grandfather, Pierre Maurice, a composer. His father, August Bouvier worked as the director of the Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire de Genève and his mother, Antoinette Maurice, was passionate about music and visual arts (Perret, 2001). Nicolas Bouvier achieved a double degree in history and law at the University of Geneva. Besides his work as a writer, he also worked as a journalist, travel guide and photographer; above all, he was a traveller. The most important acquaintance he made was probably that of his friend Thierry Vernet, a painter who joined him during his first big trip between 1953 and 1954 starting from Geneva, passing by Yugoslavia, Persia, Turkey, Pakistan until

Afghanistan in Bouvier's car, a Fiat Topolino. They earned their money through Vernet's paintings and Bouvier's lectures as well as by other means.

In October 1954, when Vernet leaves for Ceylon the two friends split and Bouvier continues his journey on his own. His pathway leads from Afghanistan via New Delhi to Agra, where he has to stay for a couple of months because of a Malaria infection. He meets Thierry Vernet and Floristella in March 1955 in Ceylon. Two months later the young couple returns to Switzerland. Bouvier stays there, but is again plagued by several diseases. As seen further on, this was the most depressive time of his life. His book about this sojourn in Ceylon, consisting less than 200 pages, would be completed nearly 30 years later and finally published in 1982, under the title *Le poisson-scorpion*. Shortly before he leaves Ceylon, he sells his Fiat Topolino and arrives in Japan in October 1955, where he stays for one year. Back in Geneva, he meets Éliane Petitpierre who will accompany him on his further tours and who helps him to copy-edit his texts (Laut, 2008). This is followed by a journey through France to Algeria. In the meanwhile, he works for the *Journal de Genève*. At the age of 30, he suffers from a writing crisis. His friend Thierry supports him and in 1963 he manages to publish his first book *L'usage du monde*. He returns to Japan, where he will spend the next two years, this time with Éliane and son Thomas. In 1968 he receives the *Prix Rambert*<sup>1</sup>.

In 1975, his book *Chronique japonaise* is published. In the next few years, Bouvier keeps travelling in Europe as well as in Asia. For the poem collection *Le dehors et le dedans* he needed a few decades and even published the book three times, each time with only small changes. In 1993, Thierry Vernet dies and Bouvier seeks consolation in alcohol. His last journey leads to Japan in 1997. One year later he dies of cancer on the 17th of February in Geneva.

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<sup>1</sup> Prix Rambert: a prize of francophone literature created in 1898.

### 3.2. Tiziano Terzani

Tiziano Terzani was born on the 14th September 1938 in a suburb of Florence in Italy. He grew up in poor circumstances. His father Gerardo Terzani was running a car repair shop and his mother, Lina Venuti, worked as a hatter. Terzani discovers his passion for books very early on, he enjoys helping his uncle who works as a bookbinder, and simply holding books in his hands gave him great pleasure. At the age of just 16, he is already writing short articles for the newspaper *Il Mattino*. He is top of his class during his time in school and is allowed to go to an academic high school against his parents' will. After his graduation, he is offered a well-paid job in a bank, but he fights for a law scholarship from the *Scuola Normale* in Pisa and is accepted there. Once more against his parents' will, he decides to take the academic career. He is interested in politics and sees Gandhi and Mao as his role models. He marries a German girl, Angela Staude, who accompanies him during his journeys until his death. To cover for the costs of his way of living, Terzani accepts a job in the Italian typewriting company Olivetti. After his probation, they offer him a job recruiting people abroad and thus, he has the opportunity to visit various countries in Europe and South Africa. At a conference in Bologna, he receives an offer for a two-year scholarship in New York City. He decides to study Mandarin and history at Columbia University and gets an internship at the *New York Times*. In 1969, he leaves the USA, together with his wife and son Folco. He is bound and determined to go to China and finally gets an offer from the German magazine *Der Spiegel* to work as a correspondent in Asia. In 1971, his journey starts in Singapore via Saigon where in 1973 he publishes his first book about Vietnam War, *Pelle di leopardo*. He stays in Hong Kong for 4 years and later arrives in Peking, in 1979. Five years later he is exiled by the Chinese communists. In 1985, his book *La porta proibita* is published, and in the same year, he moves to Tokyo with his family. His stay in Japan is the hardest period of his life and at the end of his five-year-contract the family moves straight away to Bangkok. After one year travelling through Siberia and Moscow, he writes the book *Buonanotte, Signor Lenin*. The year 1993 is a

special year for Terzani, because a fortune teller had advised him a few years before, not to travel by plane in this very year. His experience of travelling purely by land and sea leads to the writing of the book *Un indovino mi disse*. In the final stage as a journalist, he lives in India. For 25 years he had been travelling through various countries in Asia, reporting for *Der Spiegel* among other newspapers about the Vietnam War and the Red Khmer in Cambodia. He quits his job in 1996 and in spring 1997 he is diagnosed with cancer. In 1999 he secludes himself in the Himalayas. The story of this last journey is put into writing in *Un altro giro di giostra*. After the attack on the twin towers, Terzani decides to go to Afghanistan, not as a journalist, but as an author and publishes his book *Lettere contro la guerra* in the following year. The last time of his life is spent with his wife in Orsigna, the place of his childhood, where he dies on the 28th of July 2004. In his book *La fine è il mio inizio*, which was published two years after his death, he tells his life story to his son Folco.

### 3.2.1. The motivation to travel

It is perhaps intriguing as to what made a young Swiss man in the 1940s wanting to travel around the world, especially because his family had lived in Geneva for over three hundred years (Laut, 2008). It seems just as astonishing that one who lives in a peaceful small village in the Florentine area, voluntarily moves to the other side of the planet to get nearly shot in a war. To understand what may be seen by many people as absurd, the authors' bibliographies will be discussed.

Even though Bouvier's family lived in Geneva for decades, one may compare Bouvier to his maternal grandfather, Pierre Maurice, who was also passionate about travelling (Laut, 2008). With his own education and the support of his well-educated parents, Bouvier could have lived a wealthy and safe life in Switzerland. However he decided to live in overwhelmingly poor circumstances, as a traveller. He describes his urge to explore the world while he was still a teenager:

C'est la contemplation silencieuse des atlas, à plat-ventre sur le tapis, entre dix et treize ans, qui donne ainsi l'envie de tout planter là. Songez à des régions comme le Banat, la Caspienne, le



Cachemire, aux musiques qui y résonnent, aux regards qu'on y croise, aux idées qui vous y attendent... Lorsque le désir résiste aux premières atteintes du bon sens, on lui cherche des raisons. Et on en trouve qui ne valent rien. La vérité, c'est qu'on ne sait comment nommer ce qui vous pousse. Quelque chose en vous grandit et détache les amarres, jusqu'au jour où, pas trop sûr de soi, on s'en va pour de bon (Bouvier, 1985:10).

In his own words, his need to travel came from nowhere and its origin is not even of particular significance. This could be compared as well to a *disease*, which is so strong that it is not worth fighting against. However, in this extract he implies one of his biggest motivations for travelling, specifically music. This is not surprising, considering that music played an important role in his parental home (Laut, 2008). His passion for music is often hidden in his texts and Laut quotes one of his mottos in life: "Une vie sans musique (...) ne vaudrait pas la peine d'être vécue. C'est l'un des adages de Nicolas Bouvier" (Laut, 2008:221).

Bouvier was 16 years old when the Second World War ended and this marked the beginning of his discovery of the world. It seems as though he had been waiting for this moment, for his chance to leave Geneva, as François Laut expresses: "L'Europe est libre, les frontières s'ouvrent. Enfin! Pouvoir sortir!" (Laut, 2008:51). This is the first time that he leaves Switzerland for a trip through France and Italy, which satisfies him: "Nicolas est heureux: (...) La vie est belle. (...) La suite est connue, Nicolas Bouvier en a maintes fois parlé, c'est en marchant en Laponie qu'il a compris qu'il était fait pour ça : la route, le nomadisme, avancer libre et sans but" (Laut, 2008:57). As already mentioned, this experience might have been the determining factor for Bouvier's life journey:

Ce voyage a posé la question du bonheur. Où est-il? La beauté en est une promesse, mais le meilleur du bonheur est d'être lui-même promesse. Où la chercher? Dans le monde. La culture est livresque, il faut partir<sup>2</sup>, il faut être créateur de vie (Laut, 2008: 60-61).

It seems he was destined to travel, as if this was not something questionable, because there would have been no other way. Travelling was his main life's task, an exercise that had to be managed: "Il découvre ses vraies directions et ses vrais

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<sup>2</sup> Laut publishes a collection of texts about Bouvier's journeys (2012) which he names: *Il faudra repartir*. Paris, Éditions Payot & Rivages.

désirs: l'envie de voyager en peignant, de faire son tour du monde comme les compagnons artisans faisaient leur tour de France" (Laut, 2008:61).

Switching the focus now to Terzani's motivations, one might start by looking at his childhood, always watched by his mother, experiencing little freedom during the years living with his parents: "Questo è il mondo in cui sono cresciuto, il mondo da cui, appena ho potuto, sono scappato" (Terzani, 2006: 29). His first travel led him to Switzerland. He and his friend Cleto Menzella went there together to work as dish washers in a hotel. With the money they earned there, they travelled via Paris, Belgium and Germany back to Italy.

Quella fu la mia prima uscita nel mondo. Era la prima volta che avevo passato la frontiera e capii che la mia strada era di andare a guardare. Da allora questa aspirazione mi rimasse per sempre, tutte le scuse erano buone per partire. La diversità mi piaceva moltissimo (Terzani, 2006:39).

This positive experience confirmed his decision to leave Florence. The fact that both Terzani and Bouvier grew up in politically restricted circumstances - or for Terzani more familiar - could be seen as one common element. They both have this strong inner desire to move, to see the world, to be a part of it. Their relationship with their respective parents might be seen as contrasting. While at first glance, it is not surprising that Bouvier was enthusiastic about literature and almost every kind of art because of his family background, Terzani's development is rather astonishing: "Tu pensa, il mio rapporto con i libri, Folco. In casa mia non c'è mai stato un libro, mai. Non c'erano libri" (Terzani, 2006:36). In his book *La fine è il mio inizio*, he describes his mother as being of little intelligence and full of prejudice and his father as having played a rather unimportant role in the family (Terzani, 2006).

However, these differences in their initial situation could be seen as an explanation for their lifestyle in later years. In contrast to Bouvier who grew up in a comfortable environment, Terzani experienced the humiliation of going to the pawnshop. Bouvier who probably wanted to flee from his foreseen academic career, decided to lead a life satisfying only his bare necessities and Terzani wanted to escape his poor

and rather uneducated environment: “La voglia di andar più lontano possibile da quel mondo di miseria dell’infanzia? Forse” (Terzani, 2013:57). However, during his journeys, there arises another thought. The importance of the motivations for travelling are shown in Terzani’s book *Un indovino mi disse*, in which he asks himself why he started to travel so far away from home:

Da dove mi veniva allora la mia voglia di mondo, il mio feticismo per la carta stampata, il mio amore per i libri e soprattutto quella ardente bramosia di lasciare Firenze, di viaggiare, di andarmene lontanissimo? Da dove mi veniva questa smania d’essere sempre altrove? Non certo da loro, nati, cresciuti e radicati in quella città che avevano lasciato solo una volta per andare in viaggio di nozze a Prato, a 20 chilometri dal Cupolone, come loro hanno sempre chiamato il Duomo (Terzani, 2013:56).

He keeps coming back to this thought and is surprised as well when he asks himself: “Perché a quindici anni scappai praticamente di casa per andare a lavare piatti in giro per l’Europa?” (Terzani, 2013:57). Terzani who had already experienced many years of travelling while writing this book, is looking for answers, reasons for the decisions he made so long ago: “O forse aveva ragione il cieco, se voleva dire che, non il mio corpo, nato certo dai miei genitori, ma qualcos’altro in me veniva da un’altra fonte, (...) prima di questa vita. (...) Credo forse nella reincarnazione?” (Terzani, 2013:57). However, he comes to this thought only after all the places he saw and people he got to know. The response to that question could have also motivated him to travel. This idea will be continued in the last chapter about the outcome of a life’s journey.

### 3.2.2. The meaning of travelling

I travel not to go anywhere, but to go.  
I travel for travel's sake.  
The great affair is to move.

Robert Louis Stevenson,  
*Travels with a donkey in the Cévennes (1879:81).*

Life spent as sojourners covers a big part of the two authors’ lives. Not only the time spent travelling but the decision to direct their ways through a long and dangerous path, illustrate, on their own, the importance of travelling. It could be simply said that it means everything to them. Their love for the journey however, is

not a desire that is just positively and happily satisfied. A reference to the speech *l'amore Malato* by the Italian psychoanalyst Massimo Recalcati could be made at this point. Recalcati speaks about what people in love are capable to do, the absolute love, desire and to be caught by love, craziness between two lovers, to be lost in love. That the love towards the journey is accompanied by a feeling of hate, is at the latest known after Lévi-Strauss' famous beginning of *Tristes Tropiques*: "Je hais les voyages et les explorateurs" (1955:9). The love/hate contradiction which is described by Recalcati in terms of relations between human beings might also become visible in the relation between the traveller and the journey and therefore also in the works of the two authors. The power of this love, the desire to travel, is reflected in Bouvier's master piece *L'usage du monde* that starts with Shakespeare's quotation: "I shall be gone and live or stay and die" (Bouvier, 1985:7). Laut also sees this connection between love and travel and the connection to death: "Une affaire d'amour, ce voyage – donc une affaire de vie et de mort" (Laut, 2008:176).

Terzani compares in his book *Un altro giro di giostra* travelling not only to love, but more precisely to the moment of falling in love: "Viaggiare mi esaltava, mi ricaricava, mi dava da pensare, mi faceva vivere. L'arrivo in un paese nuovo, in un posto lontano era ogni volta una fiammata, un innamoramento; mi riempiva di emozioni" (Terzani, 2012:196). This flood of emotions experienced when he arrives in a new country is described as the moment when two human beings fall in love. This excitement does not last forever, but appears during every beginning of a stay in a new place, like Oberg's honeymoon stage described in the beginning of the dissertation. However, travelling can be also found as stable love in the fact that on Terzani's gravestone it says only: '1938 –2004 Traveller'. That was Terzani's wish, according to his wife, Angela Terzani. This is a very relevant point, especially regarding the question of identity. Terzani saw himself as a traveller more than as a writer or a journalist and more strongly being of any nationality. This aspect will be discussed in more detail in the chapter 'A question of identity'.

In both authors' writings, examples of a connection between travelling and death can be found. If their feelings about travelling are so strong that they would be willing to die for it, their feelings about travel could only be compared to the feeling about love. The aspect of love opens an interesting discussion at this point, particularly regarding the chapter 'L'absent' from Roland Barthes' *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* in which Barthes talks about the absence of the *other*. The *other* could be interpreted as the other country or other people from another culture, an interpretation already proposed by David Scott examining the semiotics in Bouvier's works: "This other can take the form of another person (...), a landscape or cityscape (...) or the two combined (as in Bouvier)" (Scott, 2004:80). An interesting argument appears in the following: "La frustration aurait pour figure la présence (je vois chaque jour l'autre, et pourtant je n'en suis pas comblé : l'objet est là, réellement, mais il continue à me manquer, imaginaiement)" (Barthes, 1977:22). The sentence 'je vois chaque jour l'autre, et pourtant je n'en suis pas comblé', could be an attempt to answer the question about why Bouvier and Terzani keep moving: Upon arrival in a country, they are already thinking about where to go next, because their strong will to travel cannot be satisfied. This becomes especially significant in Terzani's *Un altro giro di giostra*, when he is already aware of having cancer. The thought of staying in one place is quickly rejected: "Alcuni giorni dopo tornai a Delhi e da lì, avanti. Non ero pronto a fermarmi, tanto meno sotto un albero" (Terzani, 2012:205). This contradiction is a complicated struggle. Barthes, as well as Recalcati, call it a "folly" that is so strong as to kill and die for: "L'absence de l'autre me tient la tête sous l'eau; peu à peu, j'étouffe, mon air se raréfie : c'est par cette asphyxie que le reconstitue ma «vérité» et que je prépare l'intraitable de l'amour" (Barthes, 1977:25).

This emptiness, this black hole of longing is filled with the act of the quest while travelling, not with the love of a woman. Nevertheless, it might not be right to exclude women from the discussion about these authors' lives. Terzani's wife Angela accompanies him to the countries in which they lived and he mentions that

she was the best that had happened to him. Bouvier talks about the love of his life, a girl named Manon and later his wife called Éliane accompanies him, too. However, the love for a woman alone would not have been enough to satisfy these men, the love for the unknown and culturally different is stronger and more decisive. Bouvier uses this comparison straight away in his *L'usage du monde*: “Ces grandes terres, ces odeurs remuantes, le sentiment d’avoir encore devant soi ses meilleures années multiplient le plaisir de vivre comme le fait l’amour” (Bouvier, 1985:90). The love to travel, to see and to feel nature, to explore the world at any price, is also shared by Terzani:

Folco: Viaggiavi tanto, stavi via per settimane. Ti dispiaceva?  
 Tiziano: Non ci pensavo due volte. Andare avanti, cercare, cercare l’altro. Occuparsi di tutto quello che è diverso. Uscire dalle righe. Viaggiare per me è stato importantissimo. Importantissimo, questo senso della scoperta. Quella era la mia vita, non mi fermava nulla (Terzani, 2006:166).

And this exact phrase, ‘at any price’, leads to the comparison to love again. It is even possible to speak about a kind of addiction of this other part for which one is looking for, which fulfills and without which it is impossible to live. And like love, only death can separate this melded part. Bouvier suggests this in his *L'usage du monde*: “On souhaiterait qu’elle s’étende ainsi, en dispensant ses bons offices, non seulement jusqu’à l’extrémité de l’Inde, mais plus loin encore, jusqu’à la mort” (Bouvier, 1985:51). In the same way, it does not always imply positive things. There is a comparison between travelling and escaping which is seen by both authors. Bouvier says at the end of his long journey from Geneva to Belgrade: “la poursuite oublie son objet, tourne à la fuite” (Bouvier, 1985:367). This feeling also becomes very clear in Terzani’s writing, in a part of the dialogue between father and son in *La fine è il mio inizio*:

Tiziano: C’era questa voglia di scappare sempre, sempre, sempre.  
 Scappare da dove mi si teneva sotto controllo, come quando partii per l’avventura in Svizzera che ti ho raccontato, per imparare il francese. Anche lì, scappare, andare! E tutta la mia vita è stata uno scappare, anche in senso negativo (Terzani, 2006:165).

But from where are they actually trying to get away? Why is there a need to flee? The negative elements of a country, the inability to stay in just one place, the return back home? These questions will be discussed at a latter point in this paper.

At the very beginning of his book *L'usage du monde*, Bouvier says: "Un voyage se passe de motifs. Il ne tarde pas à prouver qu'il se suffit à lui-même. On croit qu'on va faire un voyage, mais bientôt c'est le voyage qui vous fait, ou vous défait" (Bouvier, 1985:10). In here we meet again the idea of travel being a disease. As well as in *Le poisson-scorpion*:

On ne voyage pas pour se garnir d'exotisme et d'anecdotes comme un sapin de Noël, mais pour que la route vous plume, vous rince, vous essore, vous rende comme ces serviettes élimées par les lessives qu'on vous tend avec un éclat de savon dans les bordels (Bouvier, 1996:53-54).

In some way, the journey is destroying the traveller. Bouvier agrees to this, however, this destruction does not have to be seen in a negative way. In the end of his text about a trip to Korea, printed in his *book Journal d'Aran et d'autres lieux*, he writes: "Si on ne laisse pas au voyage le droit de nous détruire un peu, autant rester chez soi" (Bouvier, 2013 :151). Thus, a travel that does not leave traces is without meaning.

In contrast to the negative descriptions of the travel, it could also work as a form of therapy at the same time: "Le voyage permet de sortir de soi, et toujours Bouvier se souciera d'échapper à l'emprise du narcissisme" (Jaton, 2011:30). The same counts for Terzani: "In reality, he was travelling because it had always been the best medicine for him"<sup>3</sup> (Translated by Pia Schneider).

Only when seen in relation to this comparison with love - and love is in this case interpreted from Barthes point of view, as synonymous with folly – are their behaviour and decisions understandable. Why else should one voluntarily go to the most dangerous places on earth, to experience sorrow, harm and poverty and war?

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<sup>3</sup> "Reiste in Wirklichkeit, weil Reisen für ihn immer das beste Heilmittel gewesen war" (Terzani, 2010:16).

#### 4. Travel writing

Travelling and writing have been associated with one another since before Christ, as in, for example, the probably most famous example of all, Homer's *Odysseus*. Dating the genre of travel writing, however, is still contested (Bohls and Duncan, 2005) and not only in terms of time, but also the quality about the literature of the travel genre is questionable. It has been said, for example, that "the experimental burden of travel writing has led the academy to undervalue its achievements. By what standards do you assess a genre whose realm is insistently the exceptional?" (Magowan, 2008:55). There even used to be a kind of aversion to travel writing: "For much of the twentieth century at least, the genre was usually dismissed by literary critics and cultural commentators as a minor, somewhat **middle-brow** form" (Thomson, 2011:2).

The amount of literature defined as travel writing has increased over the last decades and it plays an increasingly important role nowadays in a time of globalisation, as Carl Thomson realised:

travel writing has seen its literary status rise in recent decades. (...), travel writing has acquired a new relevance and prestige, as a genre that can provide important insights into the often fraught encounters and exchanges currently taking place between cultures, and into the lives being led, and the subjectivities being formed, in a globalising world (Thomson, 2011:2).

To which genre do books about travel writing belong? First of all travel writing, as the term implies, is writing about one's travel. Greenblatt and Ette describe the genre as literature between national and world literature, "literally 'literature without a fixed abode'" (Greenblatt, 2009:120).

It stands to reason that the result of writing about a specific geographic area, or the journey itself, leads to a report, a biography or even to a travel advice.

##### Travelling as a profession

Terzani has a very pronounced sense for journalism. As a young man he discovered journalism by himself: "Questo « Largo, c'è il giornalista! » è stato la mia vita"



(Terzani, 2006:45). However he does not see journalism as a hard job, but more as an opportunity to travel.

In verità io non ho mai lavorato. Ho fatto le cose che mi piacevano e guarda caso mi pagavano anche! Ma non ho mai sentito il lavoro come un peso, nel senso dell'alienazione: tu vendi il tuo tempo, le tue giornate, per cui lo stipendio che ti danno è una sorta di ricompensa perché ti hanno rubato qualcosa. Non l'ho mai sentito così. Per me fare il giornalista era anche un pretesto per fare altre cose, per divertirmi (Terzani, 2006:122).

In Bouvier's interview with Irène Lichtenstein-Fall a similar observation can be made with him as a photographer: "la photo m'a ouvert les portes" (Bouvier, 2004:115), he said, he had had the opportunity to see things like the *No-theatre* and the *Sumo*, he would have never experienced otherwise. The work as a journalist/photographer is the entrance ticket for the two authors to touch other cultures.

According to Hervé Guyader, Bouvier saw his journeys as work: "Pour lui, voyager est un métier" (Guyader, 2010:6). Terzani formed his passion into a way of earning the money: "VIAGGIARE. Il piacere di una vita. Un desiderio d'adolescente diventato un mestiere, un modo di essere" (Terzani, 2012:196).

### Travelling and writing

Writing, however, seems more like a burden for the author Bouvier, according to Claire Keith:

For Bouvier, writing was felt as an assigned destiny and endured as a life sentence, at the cost of ongoing suffering, condemned as he was to a self-imposed assignment of having to write what we might call an *ailleurs universel*, a timeless, mediocrity-proof Elsewhere to ward off the specter of failure (Keith, 2009:130).

In the first place, it can be assumed that Bouvier and Terzani were travellers who wrote, not the other way round, as writers who travelled. Of course, the writing also plays an important role in Terzani's and Bouvier's lives, but it is still perfectly valid to call their biggest profession not literature writing but travelling itself. Defining travel writers in this way, it could be therefore understandable that Magowan's assumption about the literary quality of travel writing, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, might be questionable. Travel authors from this point of

view, would not aim to create a literary masterpiece, but rather more to put their observations into writing, not to forget all the details of their numerous experiences. Travelling is a permanent gamble with one's life. If each traveller feels a kind of absence, it could be argued, if one turns around Barthes' quote "le langage naît de l'absence" (Barthes, 1977:22), that the absence evokes the language, the writing. A perfect example for this phenomenon would be the French author Ingrid Thobois who travelled the same way as her idol, Nicolas Bouvier, and states her development during the journey: "Les livres de Nicolas Bouvier m'ont fait partir en voyage. Le voyage puis le retour m'ont fait entrer en écriture" (Guyader, 2010:53) and "Je me croyais voyageuse. J'allais me découvrir écrivain" (Guyader, 2010:53). Bouvier himself clarifies this matter. When Irène Lichtenstein-Fall asks him: "Est-ce le voyage qui a généré l'écriture de votre premier livre?" (Bouvier, 2004:77), Bouvier approves it and adds: "je me suis assez vite rendu compte que la vie était tellement colorée et généreuse qu'il faudrait bien que j'en fasse quelque chose" (Bouvier, 2004:77).

### Travellers who write and writers who travel

What makes the literature of Bouvier and Terzani differ from the average travel writing? To answer to this fundamental question, it is necessary to examine the literature of both authors in particular. Although their motivation and the meaning of travelling for them have shown many similar aspects, I believe that their literary works differ in many ways.

Robin Magowan writes about the difference between 'travellers who write' and 'writers who travel a lot' (Magowan, 2008:55). Gérald Froidevaux has mentioned this difference as well in his epilogue of Markus Hedigers edited book of Bouvier's volume of poems *Le dehors et le dedans*. He describes Bouvier's work as a perfect mixture between the characteristics of these two categories: "It is not the exemplary learning of Nicolas Bouvier's books that connects both aspects of travel experiences: the participation of a permanently continuative street and that of the

selective unique felt instant, in which the world unfolds itself as the entirety” (Translated by Pia Schneider)<sup>4</sup>.

For Gérald Froidevaux it would be an over-simplification to place Bouvier in this ‘more traveller than writer’ category: “Is travel really the beginning? Or rather preconceptions of life abroad, the dream of being elsewhere, the tempting sound of mystical, exotic countries and cities (...)?”<sup>5</sup> (Translated by Pia Schneider).

### Travellers as poets

In Bouvier’s volume of poems, *Le dehors et le dedans*, he includes for each poem – but one, named “Raison social” (Bouvier, 1997:92) - date and place of creation. What can be observed already from this note is that Bouvier had been working on the poems for many decades. His first creations were written down during his journey with his friend Thierry Vernet by car in 1953, his last one in 1997, only a couple of months before his death. In total, Bouvier published this book four times (1982, 1986, 1991 and 1997), each edition with small changes. The information about time and space is important at this point, as it becomes clear where and when he was working on his poems. Bouvier finished most of the poems created in the 1960s in Japan (Bouvier, 1997:38-45; 60-62), whereas poems started in Sri Lanka had to be completed later on in Geneva (Bouvier, 1997:30-33). Bouvier’s book *Le dehors et le dedans* is not the only evidence that he has a propensity for lyrical literature. Anne Marie Jaton writes in her book about Nicolas Bouvier: “c’est l’écriture éminemment poétique du texte qui fascine le lecteur en tout premier lieu, et c’est le rapport sensible du voyageur à l’univers et aux autres qui en représente la structure essentielle” (Jaton, 2003:31). In the following passage, she describes his writing as “une écriture cristalline” (Jaton, 2003:31). The different terms which are

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<sup>4</sup> Es macht die Exemplarität von Nicolas Bouviers Büchern aus, dass sich darin diese beiden Aspekte der Reiseerfahrung verbinden: das Erlebnis des stetig weiterführenden Wegs und jenes des punktuellen, oft als einzigartig verspürten Augenblicks, in dem sich die Welt als Ganzes offenbart (Froidevaux in Bouvier’s *Le dehors et le dedans*, 1997:119-120).

<sup>5</sup> Steht nun am Anfang wirklich die Reise? Oder liegt davor noch das Bild von der Fremde, das man seit je schon in sich trägt, der Traum von Anderswo, der verführerische Klang geheimnisvoller, exotischer Länder und Städte (...) (Bouvier, 2010:403).

used to define his writings, namely ‘une écriture poétique, un rapport sensible’ and ‘une écriture cristalline’ assume that his writing is metaphoric and expressive. It is not just a report, but a *rapport sensible*. The examples of his writing which best fit this definition of his writing style, can be found in *L’usage du monde* (Jaton, 2003), for example in:

La pierre n’est pas de notre règne ; elle a d’autres interlocuteurs et un autre cycle que nous. On peut, en la travaillant, lui faire parler notre langage, pour un temps seulement. Puis elle retourne au sien qui signifie : rupture, abandon, indifférence, oubli” (Bouvier, 1985:249).

This is only one of numerous examples out of *L’usage du monde* that could be quoted here, because it is rich in those lyrical expressions. Nevertheless, reading Bouvier does not discard marks of travel writing. The reader is always informed about the geographical position of the traveller but the style is very different from that of a report. Jaton used the term *rapport sensible*, which is more appropriate as can be seen in this example: “En quittant Surmak, on traverse d’abord des étendues rouges et noires semées de taches de sel. Au bout de cent kilomètres, c’est le sel qui l’emporte, et malheur à qui n’a pas de quoi protéger ses yeux” (Bouvier, 1985:250). The subheadings play a part in contributing to the reader’s orientation. Furthermore, they provide the text with a touch of diary writing which was not mentioned before and which is probably as well a suitable term.

It is not possible to say this about all of Bouvier’s works. *Le poisson-scorpion*, for example, is much more a journey through his thoughts which can be compared with a tumultuous dream. This difference in the writing style of individual works by Bouvier, has also been noticed by Daniel Maggetti:

Ici, les contrecoups des illuminations survenues en chemin se font davantage sensibles: plus que d’une réalité dont il ne serait que le lieu de passage, c’est d’une certaine «découverte de soi» que le voyageur nous entretient (Maggetti, 1991:83).

There are fewer elements about a journey and his writing seems to come to a standstill. This introspective gesture reveals more about Bouvier’s problems and

crises of writing, than of Terzani's work. In the following passage, Laut shows the difficulty Bouvier had in writing about his travels:

C'était ça le voyage, ce cadeau du monde. Comment le rendre, c'est-à-dire l'exprimer? (...) Il faut retourner dans les souvenirs : au mieux on revient dedans, jamais *pendant*. Ou bien les souvenirs pourrissent d'eux-mêmes, ils sont comme démagnétisés ou séchés sur pied. Alors c'est le présent qui est atteint : léthargie, angoisse, tentation de la folie. Que de pages écrites, dans les cahiers de Nicolas Bouvier, sur l'impuissance à écrire des pages ! (Laut, 2008:171).

In *Le poisson-scorpion*, the travel is less a gift but more a nightmare that makes it difficult for him to continue his writing: "Vingt-cinq pages : j'ignore si c'est bon [...]. Fin de l'hémorragie" (Bouvier, 1996:160-161). It should be kept in mind that it took Bouvier about 25 years to write this book which consists of less than 200 pages.

*Chronique japonaise*, for example, consists of many facts. This is probably the book which most resembles Terzani's works. It seems to be necessary for the author to describe people, religion, the history of that country, albeit here and there he adds his opinions and elements of his own travel through Japan. The reason for that may be that the Japanese culture has always been rather unknown in western countries. Nevertheless, the book remains less lyrical than *L'usage du monde* or *Le poisson-scorpion* and more descriptive, probably because he arrives in Japan after his sojourn in Ceylon and he recovers from it while exploring the new environment:

C'était un bonheur de marcher dans ces longues avenues rafraîchies par le vent en regardant les visages. Toutes les femmes avaient l'air lavées, tous les passants semblaient s'acheminer vers une destination précise, tous les travailleurs travaillaient et l'on trouvait partout des boutiques minuscules (Bouvier, 1991:134).

The reaction of location changes will be discussed in chapter 5 of this dissertation. It should be added that only Bouvier's works have been examined under this section, for the simple reason that access to his poetry is given and that his books in general are written in a more lyrical tone than Terzani's publications. However, his friend Alberto De Maio discloses in his book about Terzani that he was writing poetry as well: "Voglio innanzitutto aggiungere che scriveva anche poesie. Lo so perché me lo disse. (...) Li scriveva per se stesso, soltanto perché gli piaceva farlo, non per

pubblicarli da qualche parte” (De Maio , 2011:85). Therefore, even if there is no access to his poetry, it can be assumed that he wrote poetry as well.

### Two travellers, two styles

Some of Terzani’s books, for example, *La porta proibita* as well as *Asien, mein Leben* (Terzani, 2010) are a collection of his articles. It is therefore not surprising, that Terzani’s works are less lyrical than Bouvier’s texts. It is more the authenticity of his words which impresses the reader. Contrasting with the lyrical composition of Bouvier’s texts, the Italian author focuses on exploring the meaning of life. It is his vast life experiences, his wisdom that his stories unfold. His last masterpiece, in particular, *La fine è il mio inizio*, written in the form of an interview between Terzani and his son Folco, published two years after Terzani’s death, is like a detailed biography about the author’s life, his opinions and feelings. The reader recognizes himself in Folco’s position and while reading the book, the reader feels as being told about the meaning of life, with all its positive and negative sides, between peace and war. The beginning of the book tells the reader right away that it has a high potential to change one’s attitude towards life after reading it. The moral, or better, the meaning of life is very much explored in his works and will be discussed in the last chapter of this dissertation.

### Travelling narratives and media

The relation between the author and the text is obvious in both Terzani’s and Bouvier’s travel writings. Nevertheless, the texts are not only a mere written account of their experiences.

The definition that Ette gives about travel literature describes this phenomenon as follows:

(...) the travelogue is a hybrid form not only referring to the ingested genres and its variety of speech, but also in regard to its characteristic of evading the opposition between fiction and diction. The travelogue wears off the boundaries between both fields: it is to be assigned to a literary area that we might term frictional literature (Ette, 2003:31).

The author states that travel literature contains a narrated “I” and a narrating “I”, thus a narrator that combines experiences with the narrator’s own eyes, as well as through a distance, focusing on historical or social events of the visited place (Ette, 2003:30), a description which suits Terzani’s and Bouvier’s books.

The two authors use different tools. They do not only express themselves in the form of narrative text, they use also other tools such as photography and mass media.

The question of images in travel writing will not be discussed in depth in this dissertation, because that would wander to another topic, however it should be briefly mentioned, because it seemed to be important for both authors. This is well visible in the case of Bouvier, who made an entire collection about his photography in *L’Oeil du voyageur* and his music in *L’Oreille du voyageur* and included images in his books *Routes et deroutes* and *L’usage du monde*, painted by his companion and best friend Thierry Vernet during the trip which Bouvier is writing about. Topping states the connection between art, music and the text. About Bouvier’s masterpiece he says: “*L’Usage du monde* displaces any hierarchical struggle between verbal and visual in favour of an iconotextual mosaic that privileges polyphony and exchange” (Topping, 2010:302). This thought about polyphony is also shared by Rybakov who focused on Bouvier’s works in terms of music and pictures: “Il musique alors la photographie. Paysages de variations, de symphonies, de ballades, de fugues. En quelques clichés, voyage au cœur d’un monde polyphonique” (Guyader, 2010:26). In an interview with Irène Lichtenstein-Fall, Bouvier describes the world as “constamment polyphonique” (Bouvier, 2004:106). As Topping has already discovered, the image of a text as a mosaic mirrors the life of a traveler and the encounter with the diversity of our planet. This mosaic does not only consist of music and words, but also of illustrations which is another important point in both authors’ works. For Bouvier this is clearly shown through Vernet’s painting. The two comrades have not only experienced a long journey together, but also combined their works with one another. Vernet’s work and his sense for art influenced Bouvier’s writing style:

C'est comme si j'avais traversé la France à pied avec Van Gogh. Il me rendait sans cesse attentive à des choses pour lesquelles je n'aurais peut-être pas trouvé les mots. Il y a eu une mise en forme du plaisir visuel, une sorte de training, comme si j'avais été avec un entraîneur sportif pour la couleur. Et ensuite, ça m'est resté (Bouvier, 2004 :106).

In some of Terziani's books, photographs are included as well. Here the photos do more than simply show the author in action. He has taken most of the pictures by himself. The fact that the reader can see the author and the pictures he took on his journey, gives the text a strong biographical touch.

## **5. Culture shock in the literary works of Nicolas Bouvier and Tiziano Terzani**

### **5.1. Travel writers as sojourners**

It has been said in the very beginning of this dissertation that people travel for different reasons. That is why some authors created different groups to categorize travellers. Ward et al. summarized those categories in a group of intercultural contact. They differentiate between tourists, sojourners, international students, international business people, immigrants and refugees. Before starting to examine culture shock in Bouvier's and Terzani's works, it would be important to clarify to which of these groups did they belong. According to the definitions of these groups there is no clear category in which the two authors would fit. The most suitable category though would be the group of sojourners:

The term 'sojourner' has been used to describe between-society culture travellers (...). This label reflects the assumption that their stay is temporary, and that there is the intention to return to the culture of origin once the purpose of the visit has been achieved, assumptions which are often incorrect, as we shall see (Ward et al. 2001:6).

In fact, the authors' stay abroad is always temporary, but they can usually decide how long they want to stay in each country, but at the end of the time abroad, they move on to another destination, as opposed to returning home. It is never said during their long journeys, whether they plan to return to their home country permanently. However, the fact that Ward et al. acknowledge that the 'assumptions are often incorrect', shows that the thought of going back home is not decisive.



Besides that, in the end they actually spend the last stage of their lives prior to their deaths in their place of birth.

The fact that they go back to their place of birth to stay there for the remainder of their lives (the word 'home' is avoided deliberately, because first it should be discussed, whether or not they still regard their place of birth as 'their home') after so many years of travelling, raises the question of why they decided to do so. An appropriate statement at this point: "We are born into relationships that are always based in a *place*. This form of primary and 'placeable' bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance" (Robertson et al., 1994:93). We will come back to the meaning of one's home at a latter point.

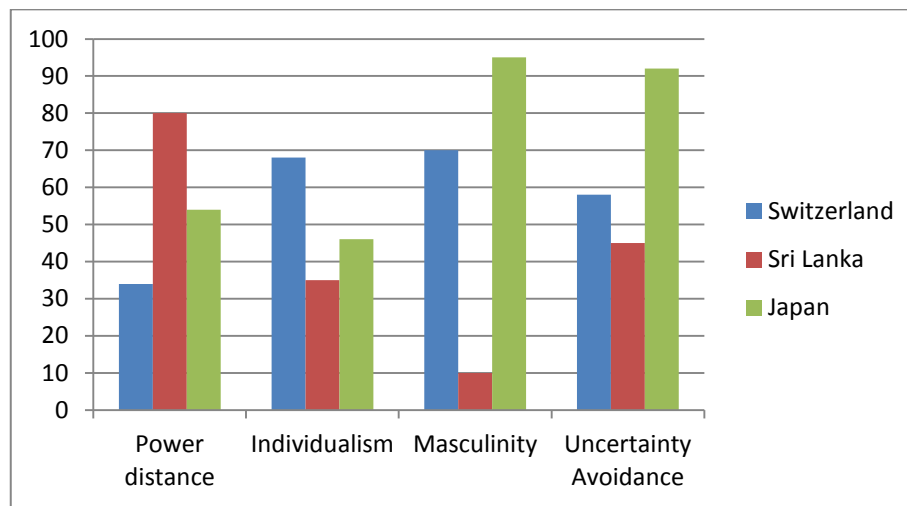
However, no matter where they go - besides having the status of a sojourner - they are strangers. That is why during the following chapters, it will be the use of Kristeva's book *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*, in which she discusses the feelings of being a stranger.

## 5.2. Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions

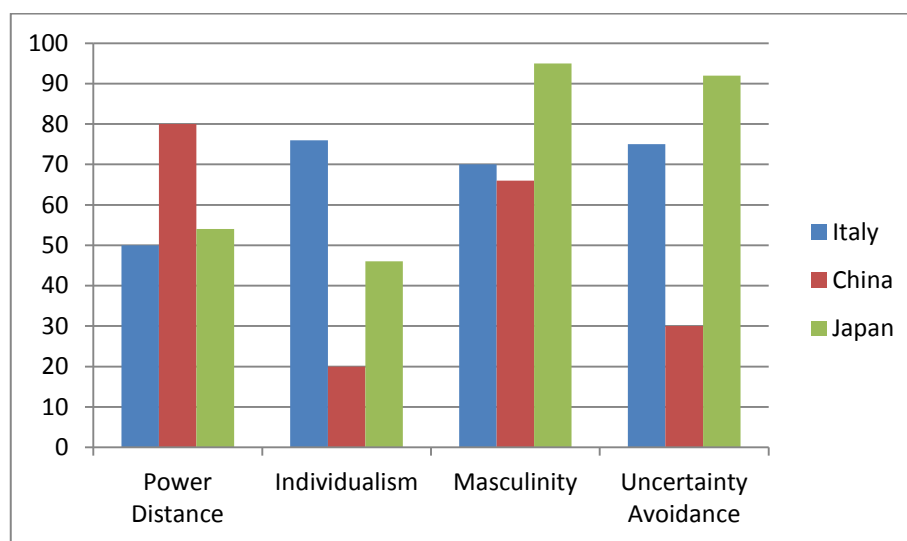
Geert Hofstede's well known four cultural dimensions - Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance Index, Individualism vs. Collectivism and Masculinity vs. Femininity - appeared as the result of a field study with IBM employers (Bond and Hofstede, 1984). In these studies, he collected data from 53 countries and calculated a number to describe the dimensions for each country. Why are Hofstede's dimensions relevant at this point? As discussed in *Psychology of Culture Shock* (Ward et al., 2001) the gap between two different cultures plays an important role in how a foreigner can adapt to a new culture and in the same way how a host country can accept the stranger. That means the impact of culture shock in a country which varies in many ways from the country of origin, is supposed to be stronger than in a country which is more familiar to the native: "The culture-distance hypothesis predicts that the greater the cultural gap between participants, the more difficulties they will experience" (Ward et al, 2001:9). It could be thus interesting to have a closer look on the countries Bouvier and Terzani travelled to and compare them to how they experienced their stay abroad.

It will become clear in the continuation of this dissertation that Bouvier suffered the most in Sri Lanka and Terzani in Japan. As they travelled through so many different countries, we will focus on three of them: their country of origin, the country where they adapted very well to and the one where they struggled the most. The chronological order of their travel also plays a role. On the website of Geert Hofstede, there is a table in which countries are characterized according to the four dimensions which later became six (Pragmatism and Indulgence). Applying that data to Bouvier and Tiziano's case would look like this:

Data regarding the pathway of Nicolas Bouvier



Data regarding the pathway of Tiziano Terzani



In Bouvier's case, the bar chart shows a huge difference between Switzerland and Sri Lanka. Japan's numbers are also not in common with Switzerland but they drive

back to it. That is why after living in Sri Lanka, Bouvier might have seen Japan as less different to his home country than Sri Lanka.<sup>6</sup> It could be therefore said that Bouvier's experiences fit into the culture-distance hypothesis in contrast with Terzani whose data do not prove this theory, at least not at first sight. Japan has more common data with Italy than with China, but Terzani had many more problems in Japan than in China. On the other hand, Terzani was very familiar with the Chinese culture, because of having studied Chinese in the USA. He actually saw himself as Chinese; he got used to the Chinese lifestyle and the attitudes of the Chinese after living there for many years. This could provide an explanation for Terzani's culture shock in Japan. Even if Italy and Japan do not show enormous differences in the bar chart, China and Japan, excluding the power distance, do. Thus, feeling like being Chinese, the cultural difference between China and Japan might explain his problems on that country.

The four dimensions and the culture-distance hypothesis play a role in the two authors' travel experiences, in the way that they may explain their reactions in different places. However, it should be considered as just seen in Terzani's example, that it is not enough to examine the four dimensions of the authors' countries of origin. Their behaviour and their way of thinking, may, regarding their living circumstances, not match absolutely anymore, because of the different countries they had lived in. Their feeling for individualism or uncertainty avoidance might have changed while touching different cultures. Terzani, after living in China could be seen as Chinese or a mixture between Chinese and Italian. Questions of changing identities and feeling of belonging arise. This shows that Hofstede's dimensions are only one possible way to organise cultural diversity across countries. However, intercultural contact is about individuals trying to establish relationships with culturally diverse interlocutors. This is a complex phenomenon and it cannot be described by simply applying Hofstede's categories of cultures as a whole. There are many factors that differ for each individual that complicate the interaction, especially identity, which are necessary for the argumentation. It can be assumed after this discussion that there is an identity change in the two authors' lives which will be elaborated in the chapter "A question of Identity".

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<sup>6</sup> See the comparison between the Japanese and the Swiss countryside on page 30 of this dissertation.

### 5.3. Elements of culture shock

According to the theory of Culture Shock which was introduced at the beginning of this dissertation, the question now is not anymore if, but how the two travellers and writers suffered from culture shock.

Out of all of Bouvier's works, *Le poisson-scorpion*, which talks about his stay in Ceylon, probably presents the most visible elements that hint at Bouvier's culture shock. This might have even led to his writing crisis and to his susceptibility to contagious diseases. His negative attitude towards Ceylon runs through the whole text, for example, after reading a letter from his mother, he writes: "Tel que je me vois d'ici : un coitron sucré et pédant, menteur adroit, toujours fagoté à faire pouffer les camarades" (Bouvier, 1996:86). His explanation follows: "Pour qui sait lire entre les lignes, l'éloignement et le voyage ne me valent rien de bon" (Bouvier, 1996:86).

In Terzani's case, one cannot commit oneself to a single book, but to a country where he suffered the most: Japan. This can be observed, for example, in *La fine è il mio inizio*: "Ti devo subito dire che per me il Giappone è stato un grande fallimento, forse l'unico fallimento della carriera giornalistica" (Terzani, 2006:253). For that reason, the two countries, Ceylon and Japan will be especially discussed in the following section.

#### Bouvier's Ceylon and Terzani's Japan

In Ceylon, Bouvier notices that he needs to write in order to continue his journey. Back in Geneva, this feeling becomes even stronger: "À Genève entre 1972 et 1980, ce sera la nécessité de plus en plus forte d'écrire cette 'pause ensorcelée' de Ceylan pour continuer à vivre" (Laut, 2008:115). More than 20 years have already passed after his stay in Ceylon and the need to deal with this experience grows with time. The need becomes so strong that he even thinks he cannot live anymore, if he doesn't come to terms with this experience: "À Ceylan, c'est la folie qui guette Bouvier ; à Genève, la déréliction" (Laut, 2008:116). The example shows how strongly culture shock can affect someone. Furthermore, it suggests that writing

may also have a therapeutic effect on the author. However this is a kind of agony as well, because he wanted to come to terms with this process, but the writing progresses too slowly. Bouvier is looking for support for his drinking alcohol addiction. In his interview with Irène Lichtenstein-Fall this seems to be drowned, played down in using the word combination of music and alcohol: “L’alcool et la musique ont été mes deux béquilles pour écrire ce livre” (Bouvier, 2004:147). Laut, however, describes his melancholy and depression as chased by alcohol: “sa dépression noire, hantée par l’alcool” (Laut, 2008:215). The fact that he needs more than 20 years to write *Le poisson-scorpion* may indicate the effect culture shock has on one’s professional life. This thought has also been observed by Ward et al.: “It is also likely to make them [visitors or sojourners] less effective in both their professional and personal lives” (Ward et al., 2001:268). However, it cannot be said that, generally speaking, travelling evokes writing problems for Bouvier, which is evidenced in Laut’s words: “Bouvier va scruter la France avec ce même souci du détail, ce même sens du portrait qu’il a manifestés en Iran ou en Inde” (2008:168). Perhaps this would have been different without his previous travels. Now, after he has been so far away from his home country, he can explore France with the same love.

It is interesting that Terzani and Bouvier had such different attitudes towards Japan. Whereas Bouvier is fascinated by the Japanese countryside, cultural offers and the Japanese people, especially the women: “J’étais tellement heureux, là-bas, après Ceylan, de retrouver un monde où les femmes existent” (Bouvier, 2004:78), Terzani is shocked by the technological progress he observed in the robot factory *Fanuc* in front of the *Fujiyama* (Terzani, 2010). He wishes to leave Japan as soon as possible, instead of Bouvier who sees his time in Japan as “une partie déterminante de mon existence” (Bouvier, 2004:84). Time of travelling is relevant and should not be ignored at that point. Bouvier had been travelling to Japan in the late 1950s and went back a couple of times after leaving the country, the last time he was there was in 1970, but Terzani saw the country for the first time in 1985. As seen in his articles, collected in *Asien, mein Leben*, Terzani saw the modern and technological

side of Japan. Bouvier, however, was more into the Japanese countryside: “la campagne japonaise que j’aime tant” (Bouvier, 2004:120) than in the industrial part of the country: “j’ai eu très peu affaire au monde industriel. En revanche, j’ai été en contact avec des structures familiales” (Bouvier, 2004 :139). The development of the country, plays an important role here, politically and economically. We can only speculate that Bouvier might have had different impressions of Japan, if he had been there for the first time in 1985, like Terzani. However, Bouvier’s opinion is that he would still love Japan, even if many things might have changed:

Mais je ne pense pas que ce que j’ai aimé dans ce pays ait entièrement disparu. Il faut peut-être simplement aller un tout petit peu plus loin des mégaloilles pour le trouver. Et je ne pense pas que les traits psychologiques qui m’ont rendu ce pays très cher (...) aient non plus disparu. Je suis convaincu que toutes sortes de bons éléments de la structure sociale sont inaltérés (Bouvier, 2004 :136-138).

Especially in this comparison it can be observed that culture shock depends on different factors and varies between the individuals.

### Disappointment

Disappointment is a typical consequential characteristic of culture shock. The feeling of disappointment could be observed in either Terzani’s or Bouvier’s texts. Bouvier does not only dislike the country but equally holds negative feelings about travelling in general:

Je ne m’étais pas plutôt dit cela que j’ai commencé à le sentir partout, la mort : les regards qu’on croisait, l’odeur sombre d’un troupeau de buffles, les chambres éclairées béant sur la rivière, les hautes colonnes de moustiques. Elle gagnait sur moi à toute allure. Ce voyage? Un gâchis... un échec (Bouvier, 1985:234).

This could refer to Oberg’s second phase of culture shock, rejection, in which the individual starts to dislike everything around him. The fact that he only stayed a couple of months in Ceylon shows that Bouvier never managed to overcome culture shock, the phase of rejection, but left the country before he could have the opportunity to deal with a possible third phase of recovering. However, it should be noted that he did not just leave the island after nine months. He actually could have left much earlier as he did not experience the first half a year with euphoria: “Et il a

fallu arriver au fond du sac, en danger, pour que je m'arrache de cette île, après neuf mois, c'est-à-dire sept de trop" (Bouvier, 2004:146). Instead of leaving straight away, he stayed there, enduring, because he did not want to feel beaten by the experience, to fail as a traveller: "J'aurais très bien pu partir. (...) Mais je ne voulais pas m'avouer vaincu" (2004:147).

Similarly to Bouvier, Terzani is disappointed in China, because he had different expectations, not of the country itself, but of living in a communist country: "Io ero arrivato in Cina tutto sorridente, ero proprio – wao! Però vedemmo subito anche l'altro aspetto" (Terzani, 2006:185). China had always been Terzani's biggest dream and the deportation from China probably constituted Terzani's biggest disappointment. This gives rise to the hypothesis that he takes this feeling of disappointment with him to Japan, the country to where he goes next and in where he suffers the most. This thought is shared as well by Angela Terzani, his wife, who writes in the preface of *Asien, mein Leben*: "Despite appearing cheerful and confident, Terzani's soul was hit hard by his deportation. It was a severe blow which led him to depression in Japan"<sup>7</sup> (Translated by Pia Schneider). This disappointment can grow further on and change into moments of despair, of doubt towards the reason of travelling as described in *Le poisson-scorpion*:

On ne voyage pas sans connaître ces instants où ce dont on s'était fait fort se défile et vous trahit comme dans un cauchemar. Derrière ce dénuement terrifiant, au-delà de ce point zéro de l'existence et du bout de la route il doit encore y avoir quelque chose. (...) Peut-être cette allégresse originelle que nous avons connue, perdue, retrouvée par instants, mais toujours cherchée à tâtons dans le colin-maillard de nos vies (Bouvier, 1996:136-137).

The same impression is found in Terzani's *Un altro giro di giostra*: "VIAGGIARE. (...) Sempre lo stesso, eppure sempre diverso: prepararsi a partir, andare, scriverne. Ma il senso di tutto questo? Sinceramente, non m'ero mai fermato a chiedermelo" (Terzani, 2012:196). The examples reflect the persistent feeling of dissatisfaction; it

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<sup>7</sup> "Die Ausweisung setzte Tizianos scheinbar vergnügten und siegesgewissen, in Wirklichkeit aber empfindsamen, leicht verletzlichen Seele schwer zu. Es war ein harter Schlag, der in Japan (...) zur Depression führte" (Terzani, 2010:13).

is the desperate struggle to something, without being sure if one really wants to find it.

### Language and culture

Language plays an important role in social adjustment and well-being in a foreign country in general. Ward et al. notice the connection between language and acceptance. Younger migrants have fewer difficulties in being accepted because they are faster in learning languages (Ward et al., 2001:107). Terzani proves the thesis that the learning process becomes more difficult with age: “Devo dire che ero già un po’ vecchio – le lingue bisogna impararle quando si è giovani” (Terzani, 2006:253). He gives as well a good example of the importance of speaking the language of the host country: „Ma se vai in un paese e non sei indipendente dalla lingua, ti limiti, sei un po’ zoppicante“ (Terzani, 2006:254). Hölderlin has also described the problems of not knowing the language in foreign places in his famous poem *Mnemosyne*: “We (...) have almost forgotten speech in exile”<sup>8</sup>. Kristeva refers to this poem and describes the stranger as mute: “Coincé dans ce mutisme polyforme, l’étranger peut essayer, au lieu de dire, de faire : de faire le ménage, du tennis, du football, (...) ? Ça reste une dépense, ça dépense et ça propage encore davantage le silence“ (Kristeva, 1988:28). In Terzani’s and Kristeva’s description, there is thus a comparison between a foreigner who is not able to speak the language of the host country and a disabled person, limping or mute. This strong image underlines the huge importance of speaking the language of the host country, even if this does not necessarily save somebody from suffering a huge culture shock which can be proved by the writings of and about the Japanese author Natsume Souseki<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> This translation was found on <http://mesocosm.net/2012/06/06/mnemosyne-by-friedrich-holderlin/>  
Original text „wir (...) haben fast die Sprache in der Fremde verloren“ available on  
<http://goo.gl/1q0cu5>

<sup>9</sup> Natsume Soseki, was a Japanese writer who went to London in 1900 and his works are strongly affected by his stay abroad (Flanagan, 2004).



### Acculturation

Another very important argument which often comes up in Culture Shock theory is the importance of acculturation, for example making friends in the host country.

The following passage shows that Terzani was aware of it:

FOLCO: Tu, nei paesi in cui sei vissuto ti sei fatto amici, hai imparato la lingua e spesso ti sei anche vestito come la gente del posto. In Cina eri vestito da cinese e in India cominciavi a vestirti da indiano. Come mai?  
TIZIANO: È il solito problema: non voler essere 'l'altro', non voler essere un intruso, (...). Bisogna entrare! (Terzani, 2006:122).

This attitude of not wanting to be the other, the outsider for the natives, saved him from many culture shock experiences. If we think of group membership "each individual is a member of many groups, and indeed of groups of very different kinds – groups classified by gender, by race, by language, by class, by nationality" (Wallerstein in Featherstone, 1990:31), it can be said that Terzani changed his group belonging any time he relocated. The process of categorisation and group behaviour has been widely discussed in Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (Tajfel, 1981). Terzani recognizes the importance of belonging to the group of natives of his host country that rescue him from culture shock experience. However, in Japan he fails to become part of any group, he fails to learn the language as well as to make friends: "Un'altra cosa molto presto mi colpì. Mentre in Cina avevamo avuto tantissimi amici, io non riuscivo a fare amicizia con un giapponese" (Terzani, 2006:255). It is thus not surprising that he is suffering from culture shock in Japan. Researchers have proved that the ability of making friends in the host country is a decisive point in the acculturation process (Furnham and Li, 1993; Searle and Ward, 1990; Stone Feinstein and Ward, 1990; Ward and Kennedy, 1993a). Ward et al. speak about "well-being and satisfaction as well as effective relationships with members of the new culture are important components of adaptation for cross-cultural travellers" (Ward et al. 2001:42). Kim even goes one step further and says:

The crucial importance of participating in host interpersonal communication activities has been amply emphasized. In anthropological studies, interpersonal communication has been regarded as a 'given (or necessary) condition' for 'acculturation' (Kim, 2001:75).

In Japan, Terzani's feelings fit exactly the symptoms of culture shock mentioned before. The fact that he has no friends, no knowledge of the host country's language and thoughts of leaving Japan as soon as possible, leads him into depression: „E allora la depressione mi prese“ (Terzani, 2006:264). At this point, Kim's theory of the natural difficulty of cross cultural relations, mentioned in the introduction to culture shock, can be observed: “Non era da me, al punto che mi prese la depressione” (Terzani, 2006:264). The fact that not even an experienced traveller like Terzani can keep culture shock away from himself strengthens Kim's belief that no preparation can guarantee the prevention of suffering from culture shock. Terzani's depression becomes so strong that he looks for professional help when he comes back to Europe (Terzani, 2006). According to his wife, he was even of the opinion that his stay in Japan and the worries he was carrying with him, were responsible for his cancer later in his life (Terzani, 2010). Interesting in Terzani's example is that shock does not stem from a failed adaptation to the culture, which proves his statement: “Sentivo che ero diventato come un giapponese (...) nel senso che non ero più *io*” (Terzani, 2006:264). In this case, the fact that he adapts to the host country's way of life and is not a failed adjustment, causes his culture shock. In contrast to this stands Bouvier's remark, whose integration in the Japanese society had a rather positive outcome, as he recovered in Japan from culture shock in Sri Lanka: “Me voilà bien Japonais!” (Bouvier, 1991:286).

Instead of deepening the question of identity which will take place in the following chapter, it should be added at this point that in terms of friendship, travelling is not only about finding new friends, but also leaving friends behind. Bouvier's awareness of this loss can be observed in the following:

La dialectique de la vie nomade est faite de deux temps : s'attacher e s'arracher. (...) On a peine à quitter les amis que l'on s'est faits, mais en même temps on se réjouit de la chance qu'on a de pouvoir se promener sur cette planète. On se dit, si cette amitié doit durer, elle durera Inch'Allah. Dans la plupart des cas, elle ne dure pas (Bouvier, 2004:76).

His very rational way of thinking indicates that he found himself was in such situations many times before. Besides, in both authors' works, many different

individuals are presented, people they were spending their time with and many of them, they have never met again in their lives.

However, Bouvier is also talking about culture shock in a positive way. In an interview he says: “A Florence, j’ai vécu un choc culturel fantastique devant la beauté de la ville, qui n’était que très peu marquée par la guerre” (Bouvier, 2004:53). What Bouvier sees as a positive culture shock might correspond to the *honeymoon* stage described by Kalvero Oberg. Later on Bouvier writes: “Arrivé là-bas, j’ai presque eu ce qu’on appelle le syndrome de Stendhal” (Bouvier, 2004:54). The Stendhal-Syndrome, as well as the Paris-Syndrome, are expressions for culture shock in a specific place, in Bouvier’s case Florence and Paris. Bouvier gives the following definition of the phenomenon: “Quand des gens sensibles au voyage éprouvent un choc culturel très fort sur un état d’extrême fatigue, ils ont un moment d’aberration mentale qu’on appelle le syndrome de Stendhal” (Bouvier, 2004:54). The syndrome is named after the French writer Marie-Henry Beyle, known as Stendhal, who arrived in Florence in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was mute for three days. He was brought back to Milan, where he started to speak again (Bamforth, 2010; Bouvier, 2004). Bouvier did not experience the same but says about himself: “Moi je ne l’ai pas perdu mais j’ai éprouvé un ravissement total” (Bouvier, 2004:54).

### 5.3.1. A question of identity

[C]’est toujours la même chose :  
une fois libéré,  
vous êtes forcé de vous demander qui vous êtes.  
(Jean Baudrillard, 1986 :48)

Identity is a well discussed topic in culture shock studies (Zaharna, 1989; Robertson et al., 1994; Ward et al., 2001). It is very likely that people question their identity, change it, try to find a new one when they are abroad, because they have to deal with many new circumstances, with different values and lifestyles and they have to try to fit into this new environment. Clifford Geertz uses the expression ‘life in a collage’ in which he describes a multicultural society and the identity problems caused by constant cultural environmental changes:

To live in a collage one must in the first place render oneself capable of sorting out its elements, determining what they are (which usually involves determining where they come from and what they amounted to when they were there) and how, practically, they relate to one another, without at the same time blurring one's own sense of one's own location and one's own identity within it (Geertz, 2000:87).

According to Ting-Toomey, one may even lose identity. She says that "The costs of such internal and external struggle and constant reinvention can include everything from identity rejection to identity loss" (1999:258). This thought of identity loss is shared by David Scott: "Travel as a means of discovering the self also implies a loss of self" (Scott, 2004:80). Kristeva goes so far as to even question the existence of a stranger:

C'est dire qu'établi en soi, l'étranger n'a pas de soi. Tout juste une assurance vide, sans valeur, qui axe ses possibilités d'être constamment autre, au gré des autres et des circonstances. Je fais ce qu'on veut, mais ce n'est pas « moi » – « moi » est ailleurs, « moi » n'appartient à personne, « moi » n'appartient pas à « moi », ... « moi » existe-t-il? (Kristeva, 1988 :19).

According to her, the stranger who can be related with the traveller, in this case, is changing for the people in the host country. He becomes like the others want him to be. He acts like a marionette and is thus not able to identify and characterize himself. Less radical, but following the same line are the theories of Cooley (1924), Mead (1934), Rosenberg & Kaplan (1982), besides others discussed in Zaharna's paper (1989). The outcome of meeting and interacting with the other can be interpreted in different ways: "Each exchange provides us with cues about how others see us, and this, in turn, shapes our view of ourselves" (Zaharna, 1989:508).

On the one hand, one might see the value of this exchange as a process of learning about himself and gaining more knowledge. On the other hand, saying that the other shapes our identity, it might be argued that as a result one is nothing but the other. However, if the other changes the traveller, then does not the traveller in return change the other? And then in Kristeva's title *Étrangers à nous-mêmes* is not only the stranger, but everyone addressed?

Zaharna discusses the double-binding challenge of identity (Zaharna, 1989). With the term double-binding identity, she assumes that two identities can be

connected, without giving up one of them. These two identities differ from each other, but have to be connected in the individual's personality.

### Culture shock and self-shock

Zaharna draws a line between the *outside* and the *inside*. That is why she distinguishes culture shock from self-shock: "Confusion is no longer with the Other (culture shock), but rather with the Self (self-shock)" (Zaharna, 1989:501). She tries to put the focus on the examination of the Self, because this is where, according to her, the shock actually starts: "First there is an intimate link between behavior and Self. (...) Second, the overview highlights the intimate link between self-identity and Other" (Zaharna, 1989:509). The relation with the Self and the Other stands after the examination of oneself.<sup>10</sup>

Coming back to the double-binding identity, it can be assumed that the second identity arises with entering into a new environment in which the way of life completely differs from the known culture. One closes his self-definition he has about himself until that moment by finding himself in unexpected and unknown situations.

### Rejection of the home culture

In Terzani's case, a rejection of his home country or rather of the whole Europe, can be observed: "Saigon è una città occidentale, con tutto quello che l'Occidente ha di peggio, i bordelli, l'interesse, i ricchi e i poveri, lo sfruttamento. Oh, abbiamo fatto la rivoluzione per questa roba qua?!" (Terzani, 2006:220). Rejection of the home culture is followed by disappointment within the host country. This feeling may fit what Park calls a *marginal man*: "Ordinarily the marginal man is a mixed blood, (...), but that is apparently because the man of mixed blood is one who lives in two worlds, in both of which he is more or less of a stranger" (Park, 1928:893). For this reason, a stable mind for the traveller can help to balance the different identities in his personality (Ting-Toomey, 1999:259). However, even stable circumstances cannot always prevent one from suffering culture shock, which could be observed in Terzani's example. He has a good job and his family around him in Japan, just like in

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<sup>10</sup> This is an interesting thought for nowadays discussions. After 9/11 the focus is again on the Other and the relation between the Us and the Other and less about the behaviour and the Self (Borradori, 2003).

the other places before and he still suffers from it: “Mi alzavo, Folco, e andavo a casa con la Mamma disperato, disperato” (Terzani, 2006:265). In the case of the two authors, it can be assumed that they may question their identity a lot while getting to know many different cultures, as well as afterwards. The following passage gives a hint to this identity struggle in Terzani’s life: “Ci vuole tempo per capire chi sei, non è così semplice. Ma quella identità lì mi pesava da morire” (Terzani, 2006:265).

### Multicultural identities

Besides the *marginal man* who appears to have lost his affiliation to either the country of origin or the host country, there is also the phenomenon of bicultural identity which states a person who is able to connect two cultures. According to the cultural-ethnic identity model of Berry, Kim and Boski this is possible, if the individual has a strong ethnic and cultural identity and can see himself as equally both (Berry et al. 1987). Applying this idea to the context of the authors’ lives, they would not have a bicultural but a multicultural identity, considering all the countries they have lived in. The importance of the language appears once more at this point. The connection between language and identity has been already recognized in the early Middle Ages and is still present nowadays. This is shown by known aphorisms for example from Charles the Great ‘Avoir une autre langue, c’est posséder une deuxième âme’ and from the Italian filmmaker Federico Fellini ‘Un linguaggio diverso è una diversa visione della vita’.

These statements, they support the possibility of a multicultural identity in the case of Bouvier and Terzani who were interacting with numerous people from around the world and spoke various languages.

In Bouvier’s *L’usage du monde* it is suggested that he might have thought about these different identities: “Je m’étirais, enfouissant l’air par litres. Je pensais aux neuf vies proverbiales du chat ; j’avais bien l’impression d’entrer dans la deuxième” (Bouvier, 1985:10). It remains controversial, at this point, whether he was able to connect those different identities, because he speaks of separate lives.

### Lost in identity

Terzani explains a similar feeling of living different lives and having various identities to his son Folco:

Sono stato mille cose, alcune vere, alcune potenziali. Sono stato gigione, sono stato attore, assassino, pedofilo, adultero, tutto sono stato, come tutti. Sono stato tante cose in tempi diversi. Tante cose vere, intense. E ogni volta una sostituiva l'altra, entrava nell'altra come in un cannocchiale. Mamma mia, quante parti ho fatto, quante maschere ti metti che alla fine ti soffocano. Fino a che un giorno dici « lo, questa – pfft! la butto via ». E alla fine sono Anam, uno senza nome, senza storia, senza passato (Terzani, 2006:420).

Even though he gives a list of headwords describing him, the paragraph finishes with the idea that in the end he remains anonymous. Using the contradiction within that extract, Terzani underlines how overwhelming and exhausting the experience of always being somebody else is that in the end all that he has been, seems to be deleted again.

Bouvier describes a similar experience. His thoughts about identity are constantly changing: “C’est-à-dire qu’il y a des jours où on existe et des jours où on n’existe pas. Moi, il y a des jours où je ne fais que pomper de l’air et rendre de l’oxyde de carbone. Où je n’existe absolument pas” (Bouvier, 2004 :56).

Later on his life, Bouvier had to deal with issues of belonging, like Terzani had during his journeys, which might be reflected in his book *Journal d’Aran et d’autres lieux*. Bouvier, at some point, actually feels like a person without an established identity: “Il me traite avec ce mélange de méfiance et de connivence qu’on réserve à ceux dont l’identité n’est pas bien établie” (Bouvier, 2013:46), the same in here: “J’ai toujours souffert de ma lourdeur ; être baladé comme une feuille morte m’avait fouetté le sang” (Bouvier, 2013:50). Bouvier is questioning identity in this book and emphasizing identity problems several times, even if they are not directly related to him. One could see his identity confusion for example, in his description of the only book he took with him to the Irish island Aran: “(...) les identités si instables que je ne sais jamais à qui j’ai affaire: si la libellule n’est pas une princesse, si la princesse n’est pas une jument céleste” (Bouvier, 2013:53). An explanation for mentioning this book and the problems to read it, could be that he is actually referring this confusion and difficulty to identify the characters of the book with himself.

## Home

It seems adequate at this point to recall the meaning of home. *La fine è il mio inizio* gives an answer to the problem of the use of the term 'home' which was introduced at the beginning of this chapter:

l'Orsigna sarebbe stato il mio ultimo amore. Mi ci sento così a casa, così bene in questo abbraccio della natura allo stato puro, che è il più bell'abbraccio di grandezza e di bellezza che puoi avere. Questa bellezza in qualche modo ti entra dentro e ti dà una dimensione di qualcosa che non ti appartiene, ma che è anche tuo e di cui sei parte (Terzani, 2006:456).

Home for Bouvier is found in a different, rather psychological space in Laut's words: "Son pays sera simplement l'endroit où vivent les gens qu'il aime" (Laut, 2008:158). Laut quotes from one of Bouvier's letter to his parents: "'Je ne peux plus attendre de vous revoir'" (Laut, 2008:158), which could imply, that for Bouvier the place where his parents live is still seen as his home. On the other hand, Bouvier mentions a feeling of being at home, when he is walking alone through Aran: "Dans ces paysages faits de peu je me sens chez moi, et marcher seul, au chaud sous la laine sur une route d'hiver est un exercice salubre et litanique qui donne à ce peu" (Bouvier, 2013 :62). The focus here lies more on the fact of being alone contrasting with the previous quotation, the countryside probably being similar to what he was used to in Switzerland. Reflecting on ideas of home and home country brings one to the feeling of nostalgia<sup>11</sup>.

According to Kristeva, nostalgia is one of the reasons why the stranger can get into a depression:

Car dans l'entre-deux de la nostalgie, imbibé de parfums et de sons auxquels il n'appartient plus et qui, à cause de cela, le blessent moins que ceux d'ici et de maintenant, l'étranger est un rêveur qui fait l'amour avec l'absence, un déprimé exquis (Kristeva, 1988 :20-21).

For Laut, it has the opposing effect. Instead of seeing nostalgia as causing depressions, it is the method of saving one from depressions: "Dans la mélancolie de Nicolas Bouvier, sa dépression noire, (...) il y aura un élément salvateur : la nostalgie" (Laut, 2008:215). Nostalgia can be as well found in Bouvier's work - even if it is only expressed in a minor way – as Laut noticed : "Nicolas Bouvier a aimé les

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<sup>11</sup> Nostalgie : de nostos, le retour, et algos, la souffrance (Laut, 2008:215).



déserts, mais la seule chose de Suisse qu'il avoue avoir parfois regrettée en voyage, c'était le vert de l'herbe" (Laut, 2008:19). This is probably one of the reasons why he likes Japan: "... sur des champs d'un vert soûlant qui me descend tout droit de l'œil à l'estomac. Une herbe avec du *trèfle* dedans, une herbe comme je n'en ai pas vu depuis bientôt deux ans" (Bouvier, 1989:219).

The fact that their hometowns are still homes for both authors seems to make their returns, from a theoretical re-culture shock point of view, successful. Despite all the experiences they have had during their long journeys, they are still able to identify themselves with their hometowns. The connection between space and identity is stated by the following expression of the French philosopher Jacques Rancière: "It ensures that things and people stay at 'their' place and cling to their identity" (Robertson et al., 1994:31). Therefore, if space forms one's identity, there is no doubt that travellers must have a multicultural identity. A suitable example for this has been shown before, when both authors confirmed their feeling of becoming Japanese. "Me voilà bien Japonais!" (Bouvier, 1989:286) and "Sentivo che ero diventato come un giapponese (...) nel senso che non ero più *io*" (Terzani, 2006:264). It has been mentioned before that these feelings relate differently with each of the authors because, as examined in this paper, Terzani suffers the strongest culture shock in Japan, whereas Bouvier recovers on the island from it. Terzani does not find himself anymore like a Japanese and Bouvier just a few sentences after his realization of feeling Japanese, finishes his book with the words: "Il est temps que je reprenne mon sac pour aller vivre ailleurs" (Bouvier, 1989:286). Therefore, he seemed not to be satisfied with the outcome either. As a consequence of this, changes of the cultural feeling of belonging and thus uncertainty about identity seem to be a critical and doubtful direction for the two writers and travellers.

Both writers are diagnosed with cancer. They are aware of their limited time to live and they decide where to stay for the final stages of their lives, the places where they grew up. The choice to go back to their home country closes the circle at the end of a long journey. The fact that they always found their way back, even for a short time stay, shows that they felt the importance of keeping contact with the place they actually came from.

Even if both authors mention places in which they feel at home, the connection to their birthplaces is still so strong that they spent their last time there, Bouvier longer than Terzani. Genève and Orsigna are the homes they like to come back to which does not imply that there is no other place in the world, where they could feel at home. One of those places for Terzani is, for example, Singapore: “Tornare a Singapore era per me come andare a ritrovare il primo amore. Era stato a Singapore, nel 1965, che avevo per la prima volta sentito l’odore dei tropici, goduto del caldo e dei colori; fu lì che mi ero reso conto di come l’essere lontano mi faceva sentire a casa” (Terzani, 2013:189), also loved by Bouvier: “Singapour, que j’ai adorée” (Bouvier, 2004:116). That they are not restricted to Asia is shown as well in Bouvier’s opinion about the Irish island Aran: “Dans ces paysages faits de peu je me sens chez moi” (Bouvier, 2013 :62). It is an astonishing realization that needs to be taken up once more in the chapter “Reflections on life”.

### 5.3.2. The importance of the house

In the previous chapter the connections between the two travellers and their home countries have been discussed. It is important to consider now that “home” should be more closely described regarding the meaning of their house. Bouvier had lived in his house in Geneva for more than forty years (Bouvier, 2004). In the interview with Irène Lichtenstein-Fall he even denies having missed Switzerland during his tours. Instead, he was thinking more about his house: “Pendant les quatorze années que j’ai passées à l’étranger, je n’ai jamais eu le mal du pays, de la Suisse, mais quelquefois l’ennui de cette maison” (2004:39). A reason for that may be the important materials stored in their houses, memories of their time abroad. Bouvier describes this relation as follows: “C’est une maison très disparate, mais où chaque objet correspond à un voyage, à un souvenir, à une émotion, à une rencontre. Au mur, il n’y a pas une surface peinte ou photographiée qui ne soit pas chargée” (2004 :235). This small world that the author has created was also supporting him with his writings: “Quand j’écris un livre, les murs de la chambre où j’écris se couvrent de gribouillis, de photos ou de documents relatifs à ce texte” (Bouvier, 2004 :236). A similar situation can be observed in Orsigna, the small Italian village in the Florentine region. Terzani had two huts next to his house. In one of

them he collected books and wrote, the other one was a spiritual place, named by Terzani after the Buddhist temple *gompa*. It is also the place where his book *La fine è il mio inizio* ends and where he died: “Portatemi nella mia gompa. Alzatemi. Voglio tornare alla gompa. Ce la fate?” (Terzani, 2006:466).

Both authors created their small space to reunite the experiences they lived. The amount of experiences and meaningful moments in their lives are difficult to be kept in mind. A fear which is very common for travel writers because of the problem of repetition: “et sa vie est un passage de fêtes désirées mais sans lendemain dont il apprend à ternir immédiatement l’éclat, car il les sait sans conséquence” (Kristeva, 1988 :22). Although the transience with which a traveler has to struggle is very present in travel literature, it is less discussed in culture shock theories. The problem that the words or photography cannot repeat or even catch the beauty of a moment, play an important role in travel literature and can be observed within both authors’ books. Travel writer Ella Maillart describes the problem of repetition in a very direct way: “La photo ne peut pas plus reproduire les tons veloutés de ces émaux qu’elle ne peut capter le lustre d’un riche tapis” (Perret, 2003:130). The spaces Terzani and Bouvier created in their houses, are not giving them the experienced moments back, but help them to remember. It seems to be important for them to find a place in where their different lives scattered through travelling find a connection. Bouvier uses the metaphor of a port: “J’ai toujours eu de longues périodes de sédentarisme dans cette maison : tout bateau a besoin d’une cale sèche et d’un port d’attache dont le nom figure sur l’étrave” (Bouvier, 2004:235). The port is a well-fitting metaphor for the house and can be used for both authors. The house functions as a stable and safe place, where the travelers may come back and leave at any time, like ships in a port.

For Middle Ages author Hugh of St Victor, home actually meant existing, reaching the status of a *perfect person* in seeing the whole world as one’s home and not giving importance to the actual place of origin. This author quoted Ovid, born 43 BC, who already described one’s inseparable relation to the place of birth:

Finally, a foreign land is recommended for learning since it also provides training or practice for the human person. Indeed, the world is a place for exile for those who apply themselves to

philosophy. But, as a certain author<sup>12</sup> has said: *'I do not know by what sweetness the land of one's birth attracts people and does not allow them to forget it.'* It is a great source of virtue that the trained mind gradually learns first to change the visible and transitory things that constitute its earthly life, so that eventually it will be able to leave them behind altogether. The person whose homeland is delightful to him is still weak; the one to whom every land is home, however, is already strong; but he to whom the whole world is a place of exile is perfect. The weak person has fixed his love of the world on one location; the strong person has scattered his love of the world abroad; the perfect person completely extinguished his. I have lived in exile from boyhood, and I know with what sorrow the soul sometimes leaves the narrow confines of a meager cottage; and I also know how afterwards, having gained freedom from such simple transitory goods, the soul expresses contempt for marble fireplaces and paneled ceilings (Hugh of St Victor in Harkins and van Liere eds. 2013:133).

In this extract, a traveller is portrayed as a positive individual that is more special than people who are fixed in one and the same place. The experience abroad and the knowledge of the world are advantages. An individual who sees himself home in the world, is described as the strongest. The author mirrors the lyrical subject, speaks out of his experiences as a traveller. Kristeva points out a similar description, however from a different perspective. Only the traveller himself sees the foreigner as someone special and stronger than a settled person. The following quotation shows the slightly ironical illusion of the traveller's impression:

L'étranger se fortifie de cet intervalle qui le décolle des autres comme de lui-même et lui donne le sentiment hautain non pas d'être dans la vérité, mais de relativiser et de se relativiser là où les autres sont en proie aux ornières de la monovalence. Car eux ont peut-être des choses, mais l'étranger a tendance à estimer qu'il est le seul à avoir une biographie, c'est-à-dire une vie faite d'épreuves (...) une vie où les actes sont des événements, parce qu'ils impliquent choix, surprises, ruptures, adaptations ou ruses, mais ni routine ni repos. Aux yeux de l'étranger, ceux qui ne le sont pas n'ont aucune vie : à peine existent-ils, superbes ou médiocres, mais hors de la course et donc presque déjà cadavérisés (Kristeva, 1988 :16-17).

Ovid's as well as Kristeva's point of view are included in Bouvier's and Terzani's works. They are very critical with the journey and the life as travellers and aware of the advantages and disadvantages of being sojourners for many years of their lives. At this point, it is important to mention the fifth point of Stephen Greenblatt's manifesto on Cultural Mobility:

<sup>12</sup> With a certain author is meant Ovid (Epistulae ex Ponto I, iii, 35-36). Check in: Hugh of Saint Victor (1991:216), *The Didascalicon*, transl. and intro. Jerome Taylor, New York, Columbia University Press.

*mobility studies should analyze the sensation of rootedness. The paradox here is only apparent: it is impossible to understand mobility without also understanding the glacial weight of what appears bounded and static (Greenblatt, 2009:252).*

If mobility cannot be understood without rootedness, travelling might not be understood without the understanding of being settled. The previous chapter has shown the meaning of the hometown in the two authors' cases. In addition to that, they started travelling only as young men. The two authors were thus aware of both, mobility and rootedness, which explains their ability to criticize the nomadic style of life.

### 5.3.3. The traveler as the Other

A sojourner is a foreigner, a stranger, the other in the host country. At the same time, the new environment is other to the individual that enters into the new place. The other can always be seen at least from these two perspectives. As already shown in this dissertation, Bouvier and Terzani tried to integrate themselves as much as possible in order not to become the Other.<sup>13</sup> Kristeva's book *Étrangers à nous mêmes* describes the other from various aspects, from a historical point of view, psychologically or from a cultural perspective. The stranger - and consequently also the sojourner in another country - includes being the other. It is also important to examine the Other in Terzani's and Bouvier's works. It has already been discussed that people in the host country have a huge impact on the foreigner's personality. David Scott shows particularly the relation between this phenomenon and culture shock:

the discovery of a deeper and hitherto unknown or unrecognised self through interaction with the other was often made at a moment of excitement or panic when psychological defences were low and when familiar (western) strategies of identification and control began to lose their purchase on the foreign or alien environment (Scott, 2004:80).

In this passage, various aspects which have been already discussed, can be observed, for example the psychological situation of the traveller or the cultural

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<sup>13</sup> This has been obviously observed in the already quoted passage on page 36 of this dissertation: "TIZIANO: È il solito problema: non voler essere 'l'altro', non voler essere un intruso, (...). Bisogna entrare!" (Terzani, 2006:122).

differences between the Other and the majority in the country play an important role.

Kristeva describes the stranger in a way that collides with the literature of the two authors. An important aspect is the journey as an escape. Probably it is *the* motive of their travel and - according to Kristeva - the general status of people living in a country which is not their country of origin: “L’espace de l’étranger est un train en marche, un avion en vol, la transition même qui exclut l’arrêt. (...) : juste l’impression d’un sursis, d’avoir échappé” (Kristeva, 1988:18). This description fits Bouvier’s and Terzani’s constant movement between different countries. This implies that they are somehow constantly in the position of the Other.

Rivé à cet ailleurs aussi sûr qu’inabordable, l’étranger est prêt à fuir. Aucun obstacle ne l’arrête, et toutes les souffrances, toutes les insultes, tous les rejets lui sont indifférents dans la quête de ce territoire invisible et promis, de ce pays qui n’existe pas mais qu’il porte dans son rêve, et qu’il faut bien appeler un au-delà (Kristeva, 1988 :14).

According to Kristeva travel writers in general are searching to find their perfect place to stay, which in reality does not exist. On the other hand, Bouvier and Terzani do not completely fit her definition of the stranger. Kristeva states a missing feeling of belonging to a place, time and love: “N’appartenir à aucun lieu, aucun temps, aucun amour. L’origine perdue, l’enracinement impossible, la mémoire plongeante, le présent en suspens” (Kristeva, 1988:17-18). The Other seems to be lost in the new environment, without any happiness. Different considerations can be made in Terzani’s and Bouvier’s case. As shown before, both authors kept contact with their hometown and are thus still somehow related to a place. Speaking about love, it is also wrong to say that they have no love during their time as sojourners, since their partners followed them (at least Angela Terzani, Bouvier found his wife after having travelled for a while). In terms of time, Terzani mentions his understanding of time in the end of *La fine è il mio inizio*:

Perché sono sempre più convinto che è un’illusione tipicamente occidentale che il tempo è diritto e che si va avanti, che c’è progresso. Non c’è. Il tempo non è direzionale, non va avanti, sempre avanti. Si ripete, gira intorno a sé. Il tempo è circolare (Terzani, 2006:456).

Therefore, there is a different understanding of time for him at the end of his life, probably the circularity of time could be interpreted in Kristeva's way as non-existing time, however, this is a positive aspect for him and very likely more related to the development of his more Buddhist way of thinking.

The interpretation and the presentation of the Other leaves in many cases a negative impression which explains that Terzani and Bouvier do not want to be the Other. Nevertheless, they keep travelling and put themselves into the situations of the Other. This could be interpreted as an attempt to break the understanding of the Other towards the directions of accepting the diversity in the world. It might also refer to the idea of being a world citizen instead of having a national feeling of a specific country.<sup>14</sup>

#### 5.4. Elements of re-entry Culture Shock

As was briefly explained in the introduction of this dissertation, there is not only culture shock when entering to a new and unknown space, but also the re-entry culture shock when individuals return to the country they used to live before their experience abroad. According to Zahara, the struggle of coming back is questionable. She asks: "Why does a returning sojourner who has developed a 'heightened self-awareness' plus new intercultural communication skills still encounter problems upon returning to a culture which is not 'unknown'?" (Zaharna, 1989:506). After having examined elements of culture shock in the authors' works, it would now be of interest to look at whether there are also elements of the so called re-entry culture shock which has already been introduced earlier in this work. Bouvier and Terzani regularly went back to their hometown and also decided to spend there the last period of their lives, as they were both preparing to die, suffering from cancer. However, it should not be neglected that before they got their diagnosis Bouvier and Terzani, were constantly on the move and never stayed home for long periods of time. A reason for this might be the experience with re-entry culture shock, the lack of feeling at home in the place they used to call their

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<sup>14</sup> Please also check Borradoris interview with Habermas and Derrida, *Philosophy in a time of terror*, (Borradori, G., 2003) in which the idea of a world citizenship is brought up after 9/11 and discussed in nowadays context.

home. To examine this phenomenon their texts will be read with the focus on elements of culture shock in their home countries.

Laut discussed the relation between Bouvier and Genève in a chapter he called *L'usage de Genève*. The expression “Nicolas Bouvier redécouvre sa ville ‘de bise noire’...” (Laut, 2008:165) and the following quotation, show Bouvier’s attitude towards his hometown:

L’Europe mange, c’est sa principale activité, et la Suisse mange beaucoup (...). « Quand je pense à certains types rencontrés au bord des pistes et sur les franges du désert, types tout nus avec un bâton, un collier d’ambre... et qui luisaient littéralement comme des cigales... » Genève a trop d’argent et des solitudes feutrées au lieu de foules (Laut, 2008:163).

In this quote, re-entry culture shock can be well observed. Bouvier’s memory of the people he met and their living conditions is not compatible with the people and respective living standard of his home country anymore. In Bouvier’s *L’oeil du voyageur* he describes his feelings of coming back to Genève as followed:

Revenir d’Asie pose des problèmes très précis. En Suisse, retour d’Inde et du Japon, je me suis longtemps senti mal à l’aise. Les magasins, les rues m’inspiraient une répulsion irraisonnée. Noël qui approchait, la foule des acheteurs, les faces tartinées de santé, le bruit des sous, la couperose me donnaient le cafard. Le seul endroit où je respirais, où je croisais de vrais regards c’était – tenez-vous bien – l’hôpital. Pourtant c’était mon pays que je m’étais réjoui de revoir, pourtant on m’avait partout accueilli avec une gentillesse qui ne se démentait pas. Alors? Je crois que c’était l’argent qui me gênait. L’argent engorgeait tout. (...), j’entendais souvent cette phrase qui me paraissait stupéfiante: « Moi, je n’ai besoin de personne. » (Perret, 2003:103).

Again, there is a dislike for the behaviour and the way of thinking, he probably already felt to some extent before starting travelling. This is indirectly said at the beginning of the quotation, when he writes “revenir d’Asie” and “retour d’Inde et du Japon”. The return from these countries triggers this uncomfortable feeling in Switzerland. Bouvier lived in poor conditions during his journeys, without the living standards that he used to have in Switzerland: “J’y suis devenu photographe pour ne pas mourir de faim” (Bouvier, 2004:109).

Money is only a symptom of a larger criticism the author displays towards a whole political and economic way of living. He is not only shocked by those prosperous



living standards and consumerism, but by the attitude of the people who isolate themselves and do not cooperate to help each other. Bouvier recognizes the huge differences between the two worlds he knows now after the journey, when he returns to Switzerland:

Autrement, et en temps normal, on n'avait besoin de personne. Ce n'était que trop vrai, et quelle indigence. L'Hindou et le Chinois exposés en permanence à manquer de riz ou de galette ont perpétuellement besoin du voisin, et le voisin d'eux (Perret, 2003 :103).

Moreover, re-culture shock might not only concern the attitudes and lifestyles in various countries. In addition to that comes a feeling of not being mobile, of remaining at one and the same place. Laut describes this very well by voicing Bouvier's thoughts: "Mais on n'est plus mobile non plus : on est arrêté. C'est comme à vélo, quand on s'arrête on se casse la gueule" (Laut, 2008 :164). A traveller simply cannot remain in one place: "Encore un train qui part sans moi. On regarde les avions s'élever dans le ciel de Cointrin. Repartir ? La Laponie ? L'Amérique du Sud ? Les îles Fidji où Claude Petitpierre vous fait miroiter un poste de précepteur ?" (Laut, 2008:164). Re-entry culture turns into nostalgia, observed during the journeys, the nostalgia of the move, the transformation travelling offers.

## 6. Reflections on life

In the last part of the dissertation, the focus lies on the outcome of culture shock and the life as a traveller in Terzani's and Bouvier's work. Even if they both asked themselves several times, what all this travelling should be good for, the answer can be found in their work. At this point, the answer to the question: 'Why else should one voluntarily go to the most dangerous places on earth, to experience sorrow, harm and poverty and war?' should be widened from the love to travel into the love for the world.

The relation with the process of globalisation, with nature, as well as a developed sense of spirituality, are especially interesting to examine at the end of their

journey. Their attitudes towards life and a kind of philosophy of the current world may be seen as results of their experiences.

In nowadays globalised time with its multicultural societies and the varied possibilities of transportation, travelling itself, even to destinies far away from the countries of origin, becomes more accessible. The interest towards cultural topics and discussions and the wish to travel are steadily increasing. Terzani and Bouvier see globalisation and especially technological progress as a threat, just as Greenblatt describes mobility:

Mobility often is perceived as a threat – a force by which traditions, rituals, expressions, beliefs are decentered, thinned out, decontextualized, lost. In response to this perceived threat, many groups and individuals have attempted to wall themselves off from the world or, alternatively, they have resorted to violence (Greenblatt, 2009:252).

However, one should not use the two authors as prime examples of the effects of globalisation. Bouvier and Terzani despise mass tourism, want to preserve small cultures and traditions, while at the same time the two travel authors cause their irritation by simply travelling through those places.

In both authors' writings they see the end of life as a beginning, obviously expressed in the title of Terzani's last master piece *La fine è il mio inizio*. It is necessary to repeat at this point an already quoted fragment, in which Bouvier searches an answer to what might expect him at the end of the road: "Peut-être cette allégresse originelle que nous avons connue" (Bouvier, 1996:137). This motive of beginning consists the pureness of the nature, peace, of simply being.

Perché ovviamente tu non sei il tuo nome, tu non sei la tua professione, non sei la casetta al mare che possiedi. E se impari a morire vivendo, come hanno ben insegnato i saggi del passato – i sufi, i greci, i nostri amati *rishi* dell'Himalaya – allora ti abitui a non riconoscerli in queste cose, a riconoscerne il valore estremamente limitato, transitorio, ridicolo, impermanente. Se la casa che ti sei comperato al mare un giorno – vrumm! viene portata via dalla mare; (...) allora capisci che non è possibile che tu sia quelle cose che scompaiono così semplicemente. E se, vivendo, incominci a capire che non sei quelle cose, allora piano piano te ne stacchi, le abbandoni (Terzani, 2006:12 – 13).

This fragment by Terzani in the beginning of his last book, explains why material needs do not satisfy him. It could also explain why Bouvier feels alive in the simple countryside. During their life on the move they got to know what is important for them, have changed and lost what they owned many times. That may explain why they feel a stronger love for the world and for nature.

The time spent in Asia had a big influence on their beliefs, as can be observed especially in Terzani's book *Un indovino mi disse*. Among numerous thoughts, he asks himself: "Credo forse nella reincarnazione?" (Terzani, 2013:57). This could be compared to Bouvier's quote about time after death: "Derrière ce dénuement terrifiant, au-delà de ce point zéro de l'existence et du bout de la route il doit encore y avoir quelque chose" (Bouvier, 1996:136-137). They see the death as a next journey and the exciting feeling they usually had before a departure returns, which sometimes seemed to be lost in between all their journeys. For reasons of space, this idea cannot be further developed at this point. Religion as well as spirituality are two wide fields and Terzani's and Bouvier's works would have to be examined separately.

## 7. Conclusion

In this dissertation the writings of Tiziano Terzani and Nicolas Bouvier were analysed in the context of culture shock and re-entry culture shock, the meaning of travelling, and the problem of identity changes. Their work as travel writers was discussed as well as what motivated the authors to choose a life exploring many parts of the world, far from everything they knew. The experiences of the two travellers and authors have been considered under Hofstede's four dimensions and a relation between those and the authors' experiences and feelings has been found. It has been demonstrated that the (re-entry) culture shock or, as Zaharna names it, self-shock, definitely had an influence on the authors' works.

A lot of important aspects for our time can be found in travel literature. Terzani's and Bouvier's lives were reflected in their work and offered us insights into the advantages and disadvantages of constant mobility. The meaning of travelling for the authors and their attitudes towards the world at the end of their journey has shown the impact of this specific way of life. Travelling is highly demanding physically as well as psychologically. Now, that the influence of culture shock was observed and the fact that it affects the two examples shown in this dissertation until the end of their lives, the term culture shock must be seen as an ongoing process. A shock usually describes a very strong but short and surprising moment. Culture shock however, can be assured before starting the journey and one may never recover from it.

Furthermore, different phases of the meaning of travelling have been observed. Their books have shown that a journey in quest of exploring the world can quickly change into an escape or even into an escape from the journey itself. The love/hate relation between the traveller and the travel appeared. This strong contradiction is an interesting process that is steadily present in both authors' works. The travellers' home as well as the feeling of being at home plays an important role. The travellers were put into context with the *Other* and the position of being foreign and different than the majority within one country was discussed.

This dissertation shows that culture shock is a natural consequence of people touching a - for them unknown – culture. Taking in consideration that even well experienced travellers suffer culture shock, proves that it can affect anybody. It is difficult to explain the strength of culture shock with Hofstede's dimensions, because of the individual cultural backgrounds. It would be interesting, to examine more examples and to see, how authors from different countries deal with it.

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## 10. Declaration

I, Pia Schneider, hereby certify that this dissertation, which is 20 893 words in length, has been written by me, that it is a record of work carried out by me, and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree. All sentences or passages quoted in this dissertation from other people's work (with or without trivial changes) have been placed within quotation marks, and specifically acknowledged by reference to author, work and page. I understand that plagiarism – the unacknowledged use of such passages – will be considered grounds for failure in this dissertation and, if serious, in the degree program as a whole. I also affirm that, with the exception of the specific acknowledgements, these answers are entirely my own work.